A

DIALOGUE,

Concerning

The Practicall uſe

OF

INFANT-BAPTISME:

PENNED,

And Publiſhed for a profitable Diverſion from the hot and eager Diſputes of this Age concerning the lawfulneſs, to an holy improvement of the grounds, and practiſe thereof.

AS ALSO,

For the ſatisfaction of thoſe who lay it aſide altogether, or practiſe it coldly, and ſleightly, becauſe they know not of what advantage it is to a Chriſtian practiſe.

8°. O. 114 Th

By *Simon Ford*, B. D. and Miniſter to the Congregation at *Laurence* Church in *READING*.

LONDON,
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VIRO
generis nobilitate,
vera pietate,
&
rerum gestarum celebritate,
admodùm Insigni,
GUILIELMO WALLER
Equiti;
nec non
ANNÆ,
nobilissimæ (juxtà)
& pientissimæ Conjugi;
Brevem hunc
De usu Pædobaptismi
Tractatulum,
Et *annexam* Conciunculam,
in
perpetuæ gratitudinis Testimonium,
Et observantiæ Tesseram.
D. D.
Simon Ford.

TO

The Reverend, and Learned, Mr. *Stephen Marſhall*, Mr. *Richard Baxter*, Mr. *Thomas Blake*, Mr. *Thomas Cobbet*, and other the ſurviving Patrons of the antiently Orthodox, and eminently-uſefull Doctrine, and practiſe of *Infant-Baptiſm*.

Reverend and learned Fathers,
and Brethren,

I Have for ſome late years (to my great grief) found the experience of this Truth, [*That vulgar hearers, and readers of controverſies in Religion, are like Larks, and other Birds in a dark night, which are ſo amazed with the light, and the loo-bell, that they ſit ſtill harkening and gazing, till the net be caſt over them;*] And it is the policy of Satan, who makes it his deſign to catch Souls, to keep up thoſe publick conteſts for this very purpoſe, that ſo he may (eſpecially in this dark night of Church-confuſion, wherein we are) puzzle, and confound the minds of ordinary Chriſti-

ans, and hold them in ſuſpence, as to the practiſe of thoſe things, which he knows moſt eminently uſeful to the promoting of *practical godlineſs*, till he take them unawares in ſome net or other; for he is not to learn that it is a conſiderable advantage to his main deſign, (*the overthrowing of their faith, and undoing their ſouls*) if he can but hinder them for ſome time from the uſe of thoſe means, which he knows are ſo great enemies to his Kingdom.

Thence it is, that the hotteſt diſputes of this Age (which for *practical godlyneſs* was once likely to have gotten the ſtart of any that went before it, ſince the *firſt primitive* dayes) the hotteſt & moſt eager diſputes have been about, or againſt *Ordinances*, the conſtant and ſtanding exerciſes *thereof*, and the *ſtaple commodity* from which the livelyhood, and ſubſiſtence *thereof* is maintained. You cannot but ſee as well, and better then I, that when an Ordinance comes to be *diſputed* either *Thetically*, or *Hypothetically*, it is commonly *neglected* or ſleightly attended, by the generality of people; and lyes between them like a *controverted eſtate*, concerning which ſomething is done to maintain the *ſuite*, but little to manure, and improve the *Land*. Men think it a ſufficient

cient plea for their ſinfull neglects in ſuch caſes, *That it is a diſputable thing, and till all be agreed upon the point, they hope they may be allowed to ſit ſtill and look on, and then engage when they ſee what ſide will prevaile.* Thus diſputes about the *Miniſtery*, have made the *wayes of Zion mourn*, for the fewneſs of thoſe that come to the *ſolemn Aſſemblies*: the conteſts about the *Sabbath*, have turned it (in the eſteem of moſt people) to a meer *idle day*, wherein the State gives them liberty to ſhut up ſhops, and ſit by the *fire*, or tipple in the *Alehouſe*, or walk in the *fields*: ſo concerning *ſinging of Pſalmes*, and the *Sacrament of the Lords Supper*, you know better then I can tell you, how many ſinfully ſuſpend their practiſe upon occaſion of the controverſies raiſed concerning them. Another miſchiefe I obſerve in theſe times of diſpute is, that among thoſe that by occaſion of the controverſies are any time conſcientiouſly puzled, it is apparently ſeen, that they know no *medium* betweene *hæſitation*, or ſcrupling about an Ordinance, (though but in a circumſtance) and the *renouncing* it altogether; ſo that the very beginning of their *ſcruples*, is a *ſuperſedeas* to their *practiſe*.

This is (generally) the caſe of the *Ordinance of Baptiſme.* The late unhappy diſputes about it, have (*wo be to them by whom* that *offence cometh*) made men of ordinary capacities, either to look upon it as a litigious thing, and ſo *lay it aſide* altogether, as the *Seekers* and *Familiſts*; or to *practiſe* it as a *matter of indifferency*, without that due reſpect to it, which belongs to an Ordinance of God, as moſt *moral* and *ignorant* people do; or elſe laſtly, (at leaſt for ſome time) to *ſuſpend the practiſe of it*, as abundance of *unſettled hearers* in every part of the Land.

As for the *Infant-application* of it, I perſwade my ſelf that the *little uſe* of it which hath been generally known, hath bin a main motive to divers to renounce it altogether, and others (through the juſt judgment of God) to blaſpheme it. People have had it commonly buzzed in their ears, that ſeeing the *Infant Subjects of that adminiſtration*, are incapable of underſtanding it, and making preſent actual improvement of it, there is little reaſon to retain the practiſe of that, wch ſeems ſo barren, and unprofitable.

But *holy men* of *all ages*, who have made it their ſtudy to dive into *the nature and uſe of all Ordinances*, and to work upon their

their owne hearts by them, have (for many ages no doubt) drawn abundance of ſanctifying influence from it, and the *principles* and *grounds* upon which it hath been adminiſtred; and thoſe of *this Age*, who have had the holy wiſdom to turn matters of *diſpute* into *practiſe*, have been able to ſay, by their experience, (in a manner) as the man that was *born blind*, in the diſpute between him and the Phariſees, *Joh.9.* concerning Chriſt, *It is a marvelous thing that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes*, verſ.30. So they wonder, that ever it ſhould enter into a diſpute, *Whether Infant-Baptiſme be of God, or no?* ſeeing it hath been (by the ſanctifying influence of the *Spirit* of God) a conduit of abundance of gracious ſupplies to them, for which they have had cauſe to bleſs God the longeſt day of their lives. And the very experience of this, (had your ſelves, and ſuch as you (learned and laborious ſearchers of the Scripture, and thoſe to whom this controverſie owes much for your endeavor therein) ſaid leſſe for it then you have) is no ſmall encouragement to them to own and value it; ſeeing it cannot eaſily enter into their hearts, that God ſhould convey *ſanctifying influences*, for ſo many years, by a *miſtaken and miſapplyed Ordinance*, eſpecially when the main efficacy of that Ordinance, in order to the mentioned effects, depends upon *that* very *circumſtance of age* wherein it is charged to be *miſapplyed*: For though it may (in ſome caſes) be granted,

[*that*

[*that an Ordinance administred with some considerable circumstantial irregularities, may sanctifie;*] yet, that those *irregularities themselves*, should be the *channels of sanctifying Grace*, is not easily imaginable. Now this is the case of *Infant-Baptism*. Many holy men, of many Ages, have found their hearts warmed, and quickened in the exercise of *Faith*, *Repentance*, *Love*, *Thankfulness*, restrained from *sin*, excited to *duty*, by the consideration (not only of *Baptism* and the personal Covenant therein sealed, but also) of *Baptisme* under the circumstance of *Infant-administration*, and the *Covenant of Ancestors*, the foundation of that Administration. Nay more, how often hath Gods engagement in *Infant-Baptism*, and the *hereditary Covenant of believers*, been *pleaded* (with success) and *spread before the Lord*, by godly Persons, Ministers, Parents, and others, on the behalf of themselves and theirs; which prayers (surely) seeing they were assisted in them by the Holy Spirit, and eminently answered by God, it is hard to imagine, that they should be founded in a lye? And indeed, that the *Spirit of Truth* should dictate, *and* the *God of Truth* answer those prayers, which are offered up on so grossely mistaken grounds as those of *wilworship*, (the crime generally charged upon *Infant Baptism*) seems most absurd, and (in my judgement) approacheth somewhat neere to *blasphemy*. For the truth of this, (as to matter of experience) I make no question, but thousands of steady Christians can second mine

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own(who am the weakeſt of many of my Brethren,both Miniſters and Chriſtians)and therfore I doubt not, but *that* will keep them upright in the preſent controverſie, though the *Scriptures*,upon whioh their practiſe is grounded, ſhould be a thouſand times more *perplexed*, and *entangled* by the ſophiſtry of their Adverſaries.

In the mean time, (however) they cannot but take it very ill, that the wayes in which they have,and do dayly, find ſo much of God, ſhould be(not only *diſputed*,but)*railed down*,by men, who pretend to ſo much *Chriſtian moderation*, as ſome of the Antagoniſts do. That I mention not the *ſooty* and *ſmutty* names of *Blackwood* and *Collyer*, and others, who have very much gone beyond their fellows in this way; divers ſober men, do not take it for any very good evidence of that full ſatisfaction which Mr. *Tombes* pretends to give in his laſt *Review* of your writings, that he caſts ſo much of this dirt in the faces of thoſe men, and that practiſe, which ſurely, will ſhew their faces in an humble *Appeale* to the Lord Jeſus, the King of the Church and Lord of all Ordinances, as farre forth,as he,or thoſe of his way; yea,or as his way it ſelf, dare do. I give you here a *Catalogue* of ſome of his language in this kinde,gathered out of that *Review*, wherein yet there is a great deal more. *Infant-watering* p. 50. *the ſuperſtitious opinion and prophane practiſe of Infant-Baptiſm,or rather (as it is now uſed)ſprinkling and*

perfuſion

perfusion, p. 104. *Who make Infants Disciples by an imaginary covenant, and their parents profession*, p. 150. *In common speech (arising from the fond conceit as if Baby-sprinkling made them Christians) Infants are called Christians. And, our Infants are the children of Christians, yet not themselves Christians, till they believe in Christ*, p. 205. *Baby-Baptism*, p. 214. *Prophane Infant-sprinkling*. p. 240. *So gross an abuse as Infant-Baptism is*, p. 245. *That which is called by Pædobaptists in their nonsense or proper gibberish*, the outward Covenant, p. 253. *They rashly and prophanely Baptize them that they have no knowledge of, that of them is the Kingdom of glory*, p. 264. *Wrangling Baby-sprinklers*, p. 276.

To all which I may adde that heavy *censure*, which he passeth, with a full mouth, upon Pædobaptists, Ministers, and People; that they are all guilty of *injudiciousness, or sloathfulness in searching after the Truth, or prejudice, or adhering to mens sayings out of reverence to their persons, or function, or some such like evil quality*. And this he passeth, not upon the profaner and looser sort, but *even those of them who are of tender consciences*. Had Mr. *Tombes* his *conscience* been a little more *tender* in this, and the rest of his high rauntings against the Persons, and Doctrine of his Adversaries in this point, it had been nothing to the disparagement of his person or cause. *Reproches*, and *censures*, may well be forborn, on the side of *Truth*, which needs not *tali auxilio vel defensoribus istis*.

I hope Mr. *Tombes* will not take it ill, that I have

have minded him of theſe *out-leaps* of his Pen, nor interpret it a *deſigne to poſſeſſe people againſt him*, and *an indirect taking of advantages* to that purpoſe (as he doth unjuſtly charge me in his firſt Section of the ſaid Booke, upon occaſion of my publication of his comming off at the *Act at Oxford* 1652. in his declining a Diſpute between himſelfe, and others, who upon a publique vapour of his in the *Divinity-School* (which afterwards he recalled at the *Deane of Chriſt-Church* his lodgings) had taken up the Gauntlet againſt him, upon the Queſtion of Infant-Baptiſme; a thing which I (profeſſe) I did only to ſtop the current of a report ſpread farre and neare throughout the Nation (by more *indirect courſes* of ſome of his well-willers) *that Mr.* Tombes *had challenged the whole Univerſity, and no man dared to take him up*: ſo that what I did therein, was onely a *direct courſe* to diſpoſſeſſe people of prejudice, *indirectly* endeavoured to be ſuggeſted to them, againſt our Doctrine and Practiſe, rather then an *indirect courſe* to blaſt him and his; and therfore I barely related the matter of fact to a friend in *London*, who ſent it to the *publique Intelligencer*, to inſert it in his News. And as concerning any *miſrelation*, or partiall narration, Mr. *Tombes* himſelfe, (to my beſt knowledge) doth not ſo much as charge me, in his Letter printed a fortnight after in anſwer thereunto: onely he caſts ſome reflections of ſcorne upon

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me and ſome others, his intended Antagoniſts then, and ſome unchriſtian cenſures, for which I leave him to account with him, who will one day take an account of *hard ſpeeches*) *I ſay*, I hope, he will not tax me with a like crime in tranſcribing this Catalogue of his harſh, and unſavoury expreſſions: which I have done that I might let him ſee, how large an *Index expurgatorius*, his polemicall Writings will need, when God ſhall call him to account, for reviling and reproaching the *foot-ſteps of his Annointed*, who walke in the good old way of *Pædobaptiſme* the High-way of Gods Saints in former Ages, and a *way of holineſſe*, in the experience of moſt of thoſe that upon due conſideration walk in it.

But I forbeare farther enlargements upon ſo unwelcome an Argument, leaving him to your learned Pennes, to be dealt withall in a more effectuall conviction then I dare (conſidering my ſmall proportion of abilities) to undertake: In the meane while, I have made bold to dedicate this *ſhort Dialogue* to your *Reverend Names*; partly, by way of *acknowledgment* of the great ſervice that you have already done in this Cauſe; partly, by way of *ſupplement* of a neceſſary Appendix thereunto, without which all Diſputes in that kinde muſt needs faile of their principall end; and partly,

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(in the laſt place) by way of *patronage*, being reſolved to turne over all Adverſaries, who ſhall, in any ſort, appeare againſt the *polemicall part* of the Truth delivered herein, to you the *great Champions in this controverſie:* but if any thing ſhall rationally and moderatly be urged by any one, to the prejudice of the *practicall part*, which I principally undertake, (what I have ſaid of the other being onely by way of *Preface* and *Introduction* thereunto) I promiſe faithfully, if ſo ſlender a piece may be honoured with a *Second Edition*, to take it up, and anſwer it in the body of the Diſcourſe, where it ſhall moſt properly fall in, without *perſonall conteſting* with any man, though I bee never ſo much *provoked* thereunto, as one that ſeeks not *Victory* but *Truth*.

One thing more I have to ſay to you, and *but one*, at preſent; and that is, to intreat you, if you pleaſe ſo farre to favour me, to give me your *private judgement* of this piece, and ſuch animadverſions, caſtigations, or additions, as you ſhall think fit to make to the whole or any part thereof; that if I have occaſion to appeare any more upon the Stage in this Cauſe, I may be the better furniſhed to render ſo uſefull a ſubject more ſerviceable to the publick good, to which it is intended. This I take no ſhame to begge (even in print) becauſe I know ſuch a taſke

as

as this (being hitherto undertaken by no other that I have heard of) will need the concurrence of more abilities to performe it as the worth and weight of it requires, then the single furniture of him, who is

(Reverend Sirs,)

From my Study in *Reading*, *November* 4. 1654.

Your weake, *but* willing, *and* (*I hope*) single-hearted, *fellow-labourer in the work of our Lord,*

SIMON FORD.

An

A DIALOGUE Concerning *The practicall use of Infant-Baptism.*

In this Dialogue the parties are,
- *Pædobaptista*, An Orthodox Minister, practising Infant-Baptism.
- *Asterius*, A wavering hearer, unsettled in the point in hand.

Pædobaptista.

NEighbour *Asterius*, I am glad to meet you so opportunely, where I may have the advantage of some private discourse with you; and the rather, because by your seldomer frequenting the publick Ordinances then formerly, I have some cause to feare you may have met with some seducer or other, and are either already fallen or endangered to fall from your former stedfastnesse.

Asterius. Indeed Sir, I have the more for-

born your Congregation of late, because I finde you are much altered in your way of preaching, a great part of your Sermons being made up of invectives against honest men that differ from you in opinion, whereas it is the duty of a Minister of the Gospel to preach up love and charity, and not division and dissention.

Pedo. But Neighbour, supposing that I or any other Minister of the Gospel, doe not discharge *our* duty in every particular as we ought; yet you are not thereby excused from doing *yours*. And yet (for my part) my conscience beareth me witnesse that though I have (according to my duty) spoken sharply of Seducers, and set them out in their colours, *that their folly may be made known to all men*: yet I have upon all occasions been exceeding tender to those well-meaning people who are lead away by them, according to the Apostles rule, *putting a difference*. But I pray you (Neighbour) tell me what honest men they are whose cause you thus plead, that I may be able to give you a more particular account of my carriage towards them, and the reasons thereof for your fuller satisfaction.

Jude 23.

After. Truely Sir, the men I plead for, are those they call *Anabaptists*, divers of whom I know, who are (I hope) godly men, and such as differ from you in nothing but the point of *Infant-Baptism*, and that is so small a matter, that (me thinks) it might be reconciled without much adoe, at least so far as that you might *love one another as brethren*.

Pedo. Indeed Neighbour, could you shew me any of that profession who have given sufficient proof

proof of their *reall godlineſſe*, differing onely about the *Subject of Baptiſm*, and peaceably waiting upon God in his Ordinances for ſatisfaction of their doubts, without endeavouring to ſeduce others, (which is the practiſe of godly and conſcientious diſſenters, from the publick received Doctrine and cuſtomes of the Church) I ſhould give them the *right hand of fellowſhip*, and love them with all my heart as Brethren, putting no difference in my affection and deportment, between them, and thoſe of mine own judgement and profeſſion. But you cannot be ignorant (Neighbour) how farre different this Character is from thoſe of that way, that we in our parts have to deal withall; that they are (for the moſt part) ignorant of the grounds of Religion, looſe in their principles and lives, and there are very few of them who have given any ſufficient evidence of any practicall godlineſſe, and (of thoſe few that have) very few of them ſtop at the point of *Anabaptiſm*, but withall run into *Arminian*, *Familiſticall*, and *Socinian* errours; withall defying the publick Ordinances, and railing at the Miniſterywhich (if they were ever ſoundly converted) begot them to Chriſt; and laſtly, there is ſcarce one of them tainted this way, but makes himſelf by and by an active inſtrument to ſeduce as many as he can. Now ſuch muſt *be rebuked ſharply*, and though formerly they were accounted godly men, yet till they return from thoſe principles and practiſes, wch are ſo inconſiſtent with godlineſſe, they are not to be ſo high in our thoughts, as till they diſcovered thoſe cor-

ruptions, they were, and ought to be. But I pray you neighbour, how long have you been an *Advocate* for them?

After. Truly Mr. *Pædobaptista*, not long, nor am I now engaged to take their part, by any relation I have to them as a Member of their Society; but I have been sometimes in the company of some of them, where I have heard them thus plead, and professe they love you with all their hearts, and wonder you should be so bitter against them.

Pæd. And for my part, neighbor, I wonder as much at them, how they can think I should not publickly preach against them, who take all occasions to seduce my flock, and make use of all advantages to render my Person and Doctrine odious to my hearers. And as for the love they beare to me, I pray God, I may never have need to make tryall of it; but if I had, I feare it would prove a *Munster-love*, where that party pretended no lesse love, till they got power into their hands, and then (in their singular love) they cut the throats of as many as openly durst professe to differ from them. And truly *neighbour*, though they speak fair to you, whom they hope to make a Proselyte, yet compare but their *professions of love* with their *practises*, you will not wonder at me if I will hardly beleeve them: for you do not see with what malice and bitternesse they do in other companies raile at, revile, and reproach me, and (especially when they had hopes of encouragement from men in power) how often they have uttered threatning speeches, and how many publick insolencies and affronts

affronts they have offered me, even in mine own Congregation, and theſe cannot be arguments of any great love. But to leave that diſcourſe, and them to the recovery of a better minde in Gods time, I pray you, friend, have they at no time endeavoured to inſtill their principles into you, which I ſuſpect, becauſe I obſerve you have had a Childe lately, and I perceive you make no haſte to baptize it?

After. I cannot deny (*Sir*) but I have had ſeveral diſcourſes with them concerning Infant-Baptiſm, and by them I am rendred ſomewhat more unſatisfied in the point then formerly; which hath occaſioned that delaying the Baptiſm of my Childe which you ſpeak of.

Pæd. But *neighbour*, if Baptiſm be (as it is) an Ordinance of God to be applyed to Infants of beleeving Parents, then it is not ſafe to delay it upon any pretence whatſoever. For although God be not bound to his Ordinance ſo, as to give grace to all Elect children, at the inſtant of Baptiſm, yet (ſeeing Sacraments are not onely bare ſignes and ſeales of the Covenant, but conduits of the grace of the Covenant when and as God is pleaſed to diſpenſe it) I know not why that Sacrament to ſome Elect children, I meane thoſe that dye in infancy, may not be indeed the *laver of regeneration*, and they receive the *grace* of Baptiſm with the *ſigne*. For if no Infant can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, except his perſon be juſtified, and his nature ſanctified, and God uſeth to diſpence theſe graces in ſome Ordinance or other, ſeeing ſuch Infants live not to be capable of any other Ordinance, why

ſhould I not believe them regenerated in Baptiſm? And if ſo, a Parent cannot anſwer the neglect of any meanes wherein grace may be conveyed unto him. Nay, were there no more in the matter but this, that I deny God the *Title* which by the Covenant he hath to my ſeed, and that as ſoon as they are mine, I ſhould fear God would be as angry with me as he was with *Moſes*, for delaying to circumciſe his Childe, and I might be in as much danger as he, when *the Angel of the Lord met him in the way and ſought to kill him.*

Exod. 4. 24.

After. It ſeems then, *Sir*, you think it a *matter of neceſſity* to Baptize Children; I ever thought it an *indifferent thing*, that being a cuſtome received amongſt us, it might be done, rather then give offence.

Pædo. I am ſorry (*neighbour*) that ever you preſented a Childe to Baptiſm upon ſuch grounds. Indeed I do, and you ought to look upon Baptiſm as an *Ordinance of God*, *ſignifying and ſealing pardon of ſins, and ſanctification of nature to your childe, by the ſprinkling of the bloud of Chriſt, engrafting him into the Church, or viſible body of Chriſt, and engaging him to be the Lords*; And upon the account of a duty, ſo it is neceſſary, that as ſoon as conveniently you may get a publick Congregation (for till ſuch a time, I think there is no neceſſity of calling for a Miniſter to do it in private, for any weakneſſe of the Infant or any other reaſon, although for the perverſeneſs of our people who have made it a cuſtome, & are loath to leave it, we are faine to condeſcend to them herein) you do in the face of all his people, with

What Baptiſm is.

the

the ſolemne conjunction of their prayers, give up your Childe to God in this way.

And ſo I ſhould, *Sir*, to morrow next if I apprehended it as you do; but I am now ſtumbled at the *lawfulneſſe* of it, ſo far am I from beleeving its *neceſſity* in the way of a duty. *After.*

That Baptiſm is an Ordinance to which all thoſe are to be admitted who are capable to receive it, I hope you will grant, and therefore if your Infant be capable of receiving Baptiſm, I think you will grant it alſo a duty to preſent it thereunto; for it is a ſin to deny any Ordinance to any to whom it belongs. *Pædo.*

Yes, *Sir*, I ſhall grant you that, if you can but make it appear to me, *that Infants are capable ſubjects of Baptiſm*. *After.*

Well then, I ſhall endeavour to ſatisfie you therein in a few words; I will onely ask you a *Queſtion or two*, to which I deſire a plain and poſitive anſwer from you; the firſt is. *Pædo.*

Where think you the hinderance lies, whether *on Gods part*, in not admitting Infants to that Ordinance: or *on the childes part*, as being not capable to receive it, by reaſon of his want of underſtanding, &c. *Queſt.*

On both. *After.*

Firſt, then, *on Gods part*, I ask you further. *Pædo.*

Seeing the *Covenant is the principall part of a Sacrament*, (that being the *ſubſtance*, and the Sacraments but the *ſignes* or *ſeals* annexed to it) *do you think Infants of believing parents are in Covenant with God or no?* *Queſt.*

I know not. *After.*

But once they were ſo were they not? did not *Pædo.*

Gen. 17. not God ſay to *Abraham*, *I will be thy God, and the God of thy ſeed in their generations*, and that in infancy at *eight dayes old*; and if ſo, when did God turn out the ſeed of ſuch parents out of Covenant? when did God alter the Covenant of Grace, and in ſtead of, *I will be the God of beleevers, and their ſeed*, ſay, *I will* (henceforward) *be the God of believers* onely, *not of their ſeed*.

After. I confeſſe I know not, nor ever heard of ſuch an alteration in the Covenant: but Sir, was not this Covenant made with the *Jewes* onely?

Pedo. Yes. But ſo as that it extended to the *Gentiles* too, when they were taken into the Church; an example whereof God gave even then in taking *Abrahams Servants* and their Children into Covenant with him, and afterwards in admitting converted Heathens into the Jewiſh Church, even to Chriſts time, with their Children in their armes: Beſides that the Apoſtle *Peter* ſpeaking concerning the Covenant of Grace, tells converted Chriſtians, both of Jews and Gentiles, That the *promiſe belongs to them and their children*, *Act.* 2.39. And the Apoſtle *Paul* tels the *Corinthians*, that their *ſeed* (if one of the parents be a believer) *is holy*, that is, to God by Covenant, (not onely *legitimate* or no *baſtards*, for ſo they were not before, but born in lawful Matrimony, when both parents were Heathens) and the *Galathians*, that the *bleſſing of* Abraham *came upon the Gentiles by faith*; and the *Epheſians*, that the *Gentiles are coheirs with the Jewes in the ſame promiſe*, that is the ſame Covenant, *Epheſ.* 3.6.

Gal. 3. 14.

After. But ſuppoſe all this, that the Covenant ſtill holds

holds concerning them, yet God having no where ſaid they ought to have the ſeale of the Covenant adminiſtred; this will not warrant your Baptiſm.

Nay, but friend, if God *admit* children in in- *Pædo.*
fancy into Covenant, and will not *ſeal* that Covenant to them, what an aſperſion do we lay upon him? An honeſt man will give his *ſeale*, if required, where he will give his *word*. Beſides, if God gives children in Infancy the *ſubſtance*, the *deed* it ſelfe, will he deny them a *formality*, a *circumſtance*, the ſealing of it? Nay, may not I chalenge what ever *aſſurance* may be given me for quiet poſſeſſion, from him that makes over a *Deed* or *Writing* to me, and that in point of common equity? Beſides, conſidering that God never parted theſe two, the Covenant and the Seal in any age, but admitted to the one by vertue of the other; and laſtly, that any viſible evidence of an intereſt in the Covenant is the ground upon which the Seales are adminiſtred: as in the caſe of Converts, *Acts* 10. 47. *Can any man forbid water that theſe ſhould not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghoſt as well as we.* The evidence that they gave that they had received the Holy Ghoſt ſhewed them to be in Covenant, ſeeing God did not beſtow thoſe gifts upon any perſons out of the Church, and thereupon the Apoſtle inferres undeniably, that they had right to the Seal, becauſe they had a viſible Character of Covenanters upon them.

Yea, but thoſe perſons gave teſtimony in their *After.*
own perſons by outward profeſſion. Infants cannot, and ſo we have not the ſame ground to

ſay,

ſay, they have *received the Holy Ghoſt.*

Pedo. The *Holy Ghoſt* there ſpoken of is not the *ſanctifying grace of the Holy Ghoſt*, for the Church could not be aſſured of that. But the *extraordinarie gifts* that the Holy Ghoſt then uſed to pour out upon Converts, which (though they were not required neceſſarily to be found in all that were baptized, yet) where they were found, they were an outward teſtimony that God had actually admitted ſuch into the Church, and ſo they were to be baptized, and ſolemnly admitted by his Miniſters. Now, if God tell us himſelf that Infants of beleeving Parents are within the Covenant, and by conſequence within the Church, is not that as ſufficient, nay, a more ſufficient ground for us to proceed upon, then the *viſible profeſſion* of any man, or any extraordinary gifts which have no neceſſary connexion with holineſſe?

After. But why then do you not admit ſuch Infants to the Sacrament of the Lords Supper?

Pedo. Becauſe God requires a *particular qualification* to that Ordinance, which Infants are not capable of, to wit, the exerciſe of actuall grace in *examination, diſcerning the Lords Body, and remembring the death of Chriſt.* Beſides, the different nature of the Sacraments hints unto us a ſpeciall difference in this caſe: for the Sacrament of Baptiſm being a Sacrament of *regeneration*, and ſo of *admiſſion into the Church*, may admit Infants who are capable of that grace, elſe dying Infants cannot be ſaved. But the other Sacrament being a Sacrament of *improvement and ſpirituall growth in Chriſt*, requires ſome ſtanding in the Church,

and

and ſtrength of ſtomack, and ſo is the proper Ordinance for grown Chriſtians, as the food of grace actually received.

I confeſſe I ſee a diſproportion between the two Sacraments ſufficient to ſatisfie me in that Objection. But is there any thing more to be pleaded on Gods part for the right of the Infants to this Ordinance? *After.*

Yes, and therein alſo I ſhall appeale to your own conſcience in this queſtion more, *what think you of the eternall condition of Infants, are any of them ſaved, dying in Infancy?* *Pædo.*

Surely they are, although I muſt tell you ſome doubt whether the Scripture affirme any thing in that point or no? *After.*

I am glad you have not loſt all your charity towards them; but your charity muſt be grounded, elſe you will quickly be ſhaken out of that too; and therefore for your confirmation in that point, I will ſhew you a little Scripture-evidence to ſettle it upon your ſpirits. *Pædo.*

And truely Sir, I ſhall willingly entertaine it, that I may be able to anſwer thoſe that endeavour to ſtumble me herein. *After.*

Well then, what thinke you of *Davids childe*, that dyed the ſeventh day, either after its birth, or the denunciation of that judgement by *Nathan*, all agree it dyed in infancy: What means *David* when he ſaith, *I ſhall go to it, but it ſhall not return to me?* 2 Sam. 12. 23. *Pædo.*

It may be he means, *to the place of the dead, the Grave.* *After.*

No, ſurely, he meanes *the Kingdome of Heaven.* *Pædo.*

How

After. How doth that appeare?

Pædo. Because *David comforts* himself with this consideration. And it had been a *poore comfort* to *David* to consider that he should one day lye by his child in the Grave, but that he hoped for a more comfortable meeting with it after death, which must needs be in the Kingdome of Heaven; besides, it would rather have been a great *affliction* to him to think, that his child was *dead*, if he had no ground to believe other then that he was *damned*. For we finde in the case of *Absalom*, concerning whose salvation he had cause to doubt, how he mournes and would not be comforted, *chap.* 18. 33.

And the Apostle that moderates the mourning of Christian Friends for their dead, 1 *Thes.* 4. 13. doth it from this principle that they were *not without hope* of their salvation; which strongly concludes, that the death of friends of whose salvation we have no ground of hope, may deservedly the more afflict us: and by consequence, if *David* were out of hope of his childes salvation, he had little reason to *put off his mourning* upon the death of his child, and had more cause by far *to keep it on*, seeing whilst the child lived, he had cause to beleeve it in a safer condition. But to leave that, and proceed; what do you think, *did not thousands of the Jews children dye in Infancy?*

After. Yes, no doubt.

Pædo. And surely, you will not say they were all damned.

After. Possibly they might, for any thing we finde wrttten to the contrary.

Say

Say you so? *Was God in the Covenant with them or no?* *Pæd.*

Yes, he was in Covenant with *them, and their seed.* *After.*

And *will God break his part of the Covenant with any one, who doth not break with him?* *Pæd.*

No surely, for he is a God that *keepeth promise and Covenant for ever*; and is so far from that, that he keeps Covenant with us, when we deale treacherously and perfidiously with him. *After.*

Well then, the Jews Infants dying in infancy, were not excluded the Kingdom of Heaven, seeing they dyed under the wing of Gods Covenant, which on their part they could not forfeit by any actuall sinne, and without actuall forfeiture you grant God annulls his Covenant with no man. *Pæd:*

But that Covenant with *Abraham* and his seed, was a Covenaut of *outward things*, as some say, *viz.* to give them the *Land of Canaan.* *After.*

But it was a Covenant made with *all his seed*, for upon the account thereof they were all circumcised, and admitted to the Passeover. *Pæd.*

Suppose that, what follows thence? *After.*

Yes this follows, That it was *more then an outward Covenant*, containing the promise of a Temporall *Canaan*; for else those children of *Abraham* that dyed in infancy, had had no more share in it, and so the Seale to them had confirmed a *meer blanck*, or as bad, to wit, *such a deed as they should never be the better for.* *Pæd.*

And therefore, no doubt the promise of *Canaan* is rather an *addition* to the Covenant, then the *substance of it*; or if of the substance of it, it implyes

implyes *more* then the Land ſo called, and muſt be underſtood Typically of a ſpirituall *Canaan*, the Kingdome of Heaven. And ſo God fulfilled the Covenant to thoſe beleevers, and elected Infants who enjoyed not the temporall *Canaan*, ſeeing they enjoyed that *other reſt*, which *Jeſus* not *Joſhua* brought them to: which is that that the Apoſtle affirmes, *Heb.* 3. And ſo, the addition of the promiſe of *Canaan* to the Covenant of *Abraham*, is a firmer argument for me to prove the ſalvation of thoſe Infants dying in Infancy, to whom Temporall *Canaan* was no mercy.

But it is cleare, that that ſubſtance of the Covenant was Spirituall, a Covenant of Grace, becauſe Circumciſion annexed to it as a Seale ſignified Spirituall, and thoſe ſaving mercies, *Deut.* 30. 6. *Rom.* 4. 11. *Col.* 2. 11, 12.

After. But doth that concern *our Infants*, who are not of *Abrahams* loines?

Pedo. Yes, for by the former argument I have proved the Covenant with *Abraham*, and beleeving Gentiles the ſame: Beſides, can it be imagined that God who gave ſalvation to Infant-Jewes, ſhall exclude the Infants of the beleeving Gentiles out of the Kingdome of Glory, who are ten thouſand times the number, in all probability? what is there that ſhould make ſo great a difference, or on what word can we ground the conceit of ſo great a difference?

After. Well, I ſuppoſe this proved ſufficiently, that Infants muſt be ſaved; but what is that to prove that they may be Baptized?

Pedo. I have one argument more in this point, and then

then I will shew you. You finde our Saviour Christ affirming no lesse in positive termes, *Mat.* 19. 15, 16. recorded by two other Evangelists also, *Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the Kingdome of Heaven.* And it is remarkable, that *Luke* when he relates the same story, to assure us, that they were not capable of actuall faith, calls them βρέφη, Infants, *Luk.* 18. 15. a word which constantly is used to signifie that *tender age*, and never applyed to any *adult children.*

After. But it is said, that *of such is the Kingdome of God*; not of *these*, but of *such as these*, *i. e.* Say the Adversaries of Infant-Baptism, of those that are meek, humble, &c. like these.

Pædo. Surely, friend this must needs be a *wretched evasion*; for can any man think that Christ bestowes blessings upon any thing meerely upon a bare similitude between Saints and it? why then doth he not blesse *sheep*, *doves*, *serpents*, &c. between whom and Saints there is no lesse resemblance? Is the solemn blessing of Christ bestowed upon such slight grounds?

I might possibly have spared much of this labour upon your former concession, but that I was willing to establish your belief in this point upon Scripture-grounds: and therefore I shall now shew you what use I make oá this that hath been said.

After. Yea Sir, I expect you should now shew how the concession of *salvation* to Infants, concludes your *right to Baptism.*

Pædo. Thus, Salvation is not extended by the Scripture beyond the Church; Christ is the *Saviour of his body*, and that only, *Eph.* 5. 23. If then Infants

fants be *capable of salvation*, they are *of the body*; and if so, have right to the *Seale of admission* by which Membere are engrafted thereinto, which is Baptism.

After. Yes, without doubt if Infants be saved, it follows that they are Members of the *Church invisible*; but Baptism is not administred upon the account of Membership in the *Church invisible*, except it appear also that any of them belong to the *Church visible*.

Pedo. This I shall undertake therefore, to evince in the next place, upon the former grounds: surely you being convinced that Infants are not on *Gods part* excluded from an interest in the Covenant of grace & salvation by it, either extend that *charity to all* Infants, or *some* only; if to all Infants, your charity is no Scripturall charity, because the Scripture affirmes all to be born in originall sinne, and addes moreover, that divers Infants who never committed actuall sinne, dyed upon that account everlastingly, for the Apostle tells us so expressly, *Rom* 5. 14. And as for those that were destroyed in the fire of *Sodome* and its neighbor Cities, the Apostle *Jude* tells us that

Jude 7. they all *suffer the vengeance of eternall fire*; and surely many hundreds of them were Infants. If your charity extend to *some* Infants onely, I would faine know what ground there is upon which your charity may hope the salvation of *some* Infants more then *others*. Upon what ground did *David* hope the salvation of *his childe*, more then of any childe of the cursed *Canaanites*? Upon what ground can any *Christian* expect the same concerning his childe, more then

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concerning the childe of a *Turk* or an *Indian?* If there be a rule on which this difference is founded that rule wil make *thoſe* Infants viſible Church-Members and *others* not. For every one concerning whoſe ſalvation the Church have a warrantable ground to hope, is *by right* a Member thereof, ſeeing the *Church on earth* hath no reaſon to ſhut the doores againſt ſuch, whom it is perſwaded God will (they dying in ſuch a condition) admit into *Heaven.*

But is there ſuch a ground of diſtinguiſhing charity, I pray what is it? *After.*

There is, and that is, the *parents viſible Church-memberſhip, and externall relation to the Covenant*; for the Covenant (as was before ſaid) admitting parents, admits their ſeed with them: and by conſequence, the ſeed of thoſe who are in Covenant themſelves, are in Covenant upon their account. *Pedo.*

Now ſeeing the Covenant runs onely to *Beleevers and their ſeed*, and no where to *the ſeed of profeſſed unbeleevers*; we may and muſt conclude, that the Infant ſeed of ſuch unbeleevers have no hope of ſalvation, and the ſeed of profeſſed beleevers have; and by conſequencee it follows, that *theſe* are viſible Church-Members upon the former ground, and *theſe* not ſo.

Nay, we have more ground to acknowledge the Church-memberſhip of ſuch *Infants*, then of *grown Chriſtians*, becauſe our acknowledgment of theſe depends upon their *own* teſtimony only in a viſible profeſſion, which may be counterfeit. But Infants are accepted as Church-members upon a *divine* Teſtimony concerning them

and their condition, which in their present infant-state they cannot be liable to any suspition of defeating by hypocrisie. *Simon Magus* professing, was a *Church-member* and an *Hypocrite*; Infants being by God owned for Church members, possibly may be *non-elected*, but cannot be *hypocrites*.

After. I confesse Sir, you say more for the Baptizing of Infants, then I have before heard, and I do not at the present see what may be materially objected; yet is there one thing that sticks with me more then all the rest, and that is *the unprofitablenesse of this Doctrine, and of this Ordinance so administred*, seeing Infants at present can make no use of it; and in my judgement there is no such advantage to be made by them when they come to yeares of discretion, of that Baptisme which in *Infancy* they received, as might be made of the same received at *years of judgement* upon their own personall profession.

Peale. You then conceive an hinderance *on the childs part*, but I shall not easily grant you, that Baptisme is altogether unprofitable unto Infants *dying in Infancy*; For (besides that divers Divines of speciall note, do hold the *justification of all duely baptized Infants in Baptisme, and dying in infancy, and the washing away the guilt of original sin from all Infants so baptized, whether elect or non-elect*; which (I confesse) I cannot swallow in such a latitude, for divers reasons which it is beside my present businesse to alledge, and the maine of them is, that this Doctrine seemes too much to favour *Apostacy from grace*) you know I have before given you some grounds why I perswade

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my ſelfe, that *ſome Infants*, to wit, *ſuch as being elected dye in Infancy, are juſtified and ſanctified in the adminiſtration of that Ordinance.*

But not to inſiſt further on that, I ſhall undertake (by Gods aſſiſtance) to ſhew you before we part, ſomething more then you deſire in this point, *viz.*

> *That there is much more advantage to be made in order to ſanctification, conſolation, and ſeveral other wayes of the Doctrine and practiſe of Infant-Baptiſm, then of that Doctrine and practiſe that limits Baptiſm onely to perſonall profeſſion at years of diſcretion. If I prove it more uſefull, I doe with advantage prove it as uſefull, which is the thing you queſtion.*

After. I grant it is more then I deſire, and if you perform this, I ſhall entirely yeeld you the whole queſtion: For (to tell you the truth) my ſelfe, and ſuch as I am, being plain and unlearned men are not ſo capable of judging of thoſe *arguments* that are diſputed on both ſides in this matter; wherefore we rather leave them to be examined by learned men. But that that prevailes moſt with us, is the *uſeleſsneſs* of that adminiſtration, and the foundations upon which it is built, together with the *advantage* which in this particular we conceived, the contrary principles and practiſe have in point of benefit; wherefore I pray you proceed in your intendment.

Pæd. Very willingly I ſhall, for (although I think it no ſufficient Argument to prove a *divine Inſtitution* in any thing, to ſhew how *uſefull* it may be; becauſe I know that it is an advantage given

to those that shall at any time be willing to innovate; in which cases it is an easie matter for the will of man to finde out some practicall use or other of every such invention of your own braines, and hereof we have had sufficient experience in those who obtruded a fardell of ceremonies upon this Church of late yeares, and would have screwed them up to a Divine Institution upon such grounds; yet) when any thing as to Divine Institution hath much countenance from *Scripture*, interpreted by the constant practise of the *best antiquity*, it may be of considerable advantage to turne the scales in a rationall mans judgement, that it hath a speciall use towards the promoting of godlinesse for the present, and assuring happinesse for the future: especially when an *unquestionable Divine Institution* hath appointed formerly a *parallell* Ordinance for the same uses, and those uses are as evidently without forced consequences, to be made of the Institution *in question*, as ever of that former which is *out of question*, which is in the case of *Baptism*, with relation to *Circumcision*, which was instituted by God to signifie the *same things* with Baptism, and was then used for the same *ends*.

Wherefore I very well like your motion in this particular, and concurre with you in your resolution, to leave the *notionall part* of this question, and examine the *practicall part*, and that for these additionall reasons.

1. Because most people *sell* this precious *birthright* of theirs, and their Infants in Gods Covenant, and (by consequence) in Baptism, for as little

little as *Eſau*, (who therefore is called *prophane Eſau*, becauſe he ſold the *Church privilege* of his poſterity, not becauſe he ſold a meet *outward prerogative* of being the firſt-borne, for that had at moſt been but *folly*, or (at moſt) but a *civill injury* to his poſterity, and not in any ſenſe *prophaneneſs*, ſeeing an heir that ſells away his Land of Inheritance, is not therefore to be called *profane*) I ſay, many like *Eſau* ſell this birth-right, becauſe they know not what *good it will doe unto them.* Gen. 25. 23.

2. Becauſe I perceive the maine Art of Seducers, in their ſnares they lay for plain-meaning people, lyes that way; they ſeek to prove it *unlawfull*, becauſe *unuſefull*. For it is no hard matter for them to perſwade ſilly people, that Infants being uncapable of underſtanding what is done to them in Baptiſm, may as well be *without* it as *with* it; ſeeing all the uſe they can make of it, is at years of diſcretion; and if ſo, were it not better (ſay they) to deferre the *adminiſtration* of that till ſuch years, whereof no *uſe* can be made till then?

3. Becauſe I perceive it is the Devills great policy to turne off the mindes of men from the *practicall improvement* of their Baptiſm, by filling their heads with *notions*, and engaging them in diſputes about the *adminiſtration of it*; and as he deals in *this*, ſo in the *other Sacrament*, he hath endeavoured and ſtill endeavours (if poſſible) to keep men from enjoying of it by ſuch queſtions; ſo heretofore, by ſtirring Diſputes about *Altars*, and *Rayles*, and *Geſtures*, and the *Liturgy* wherein it was adminiſtred, and *badneſs of Miniſters* adminiſtring; and of late about *ſit*

communicants, incapacity of adminiſtration for want of an eſtabliſhed Government, &c. He hath ſtill prevailed with divers, ſo farre as to exclude them from it for divers years together. Now there is no ſuch way to countermine him herein, as by endeavouring to liſt up the *practicall part* of Sacraments in the mindes of men, as high as ever the *controverſall part* was.

4. Becauſe I have cauſe to conceive, that Infant-Baptiſm being an *engaging Ordinance*, hath (under God) been ſanctified to the *preſervation* of divers perſons in theſe giddy times in the beleefe of that *Truth wherein they were baptized*; whereas it appeares (on the other ſide) that the judgement of God hath in no one thing more viſibly broken forth againſt the generality of the renouncers thereof, then *in giving them over* to the renouncing thoſe principles and ways of God, to which they were then engaged; God uſually puniſhing *partiall* Apoſtacy with *totall* and *univerſall* back-ſliding.

But to the proofs, and firſt, (*in generall*) no queſtion but God knew, when he had a Church to ſet up in the world in *Abrahams* time, at *what age* it was fitteſt, and moſt beneficiall to admit Members into it; yet we ſee that (although he took the firſt roote *Abraham* when he was a *grown tree* at yeares of diſcretion, yet) he choſe rather to take the reſt of the *plants* when they were *twigs*, in their infancy. And doubtles ſeeing Circumciſion was (as Baptiſm is) an *engaging Ordinance* obliging them to God, and God to them, he knew it was of more uſe for *his* glory and ſervice, and *their* profit and comfort, to ratifie.

tifie that engagement betimes; and I perſwade my ſelf, had it been poſſible for *Abraham* to have been at his choice, he would have rather been admitted in infancy as his ſeed were, for his own profit, upon Arguments which you ſhall heare anon. And I conceive the like of thoſe men and women that were baptized at yeares of diſcretion, that they, had they been alike at liberty, would have made the like choice.

Sir, I deſire thoſe grounds you ſpeak of, for till I ſee them, *I* cannot conceive ſuch a choice probable. *After.*

I will performe your deſire, and ſo proceed to *particular* Arguments; firſt then, in point of *Sanctification.* The grounds and practiſe of *Infant-Baptiſm* are more *ſanctifying*, then thoſe of Baptiſm received *at riper age*, and more conduce to the acting thereof in all its latitude. *Sanctification conſiſts* of two parts. *Paedo.*

Mortification, or a death unto ſin.
Vivification, or a life unto God.

Now Sacraments are helpfull to Sanctification, either *morally* by motive and engagement to the practiſe of it, or *phyſically* by conveying ſtrength and power thereunto.

As to the latter of theſe, Sacraments convey Grace from God, as other means do, meerly according to his good pleaſure, without any relation to the capacity of the creature: and ſurely God can work Grace in Infants, as well as in elder perſons by infuſion; and therefore herein I ſee no ground to lay any compariſon; ſo that *I*

ſhall undertake onely the former of theſe wayes wherein God ſanctifies by Sacraments, *viz.* by way of motive or engagement on our parts: This I ſhall ſhew,

1. From the *grounds* on which its practiſed.
2. From the *practiſe* it ſelf.

And ſhall plainly evidence to you, that the *grounds* of Infant-Baptiſme afford ſtronger *motives*, and the *practiſe* of it ſtronger *engagements* to Sanctification in both the fore-mentioned parts, then the *contrary* grounds and practiſe can, and I hope I proceed according to your mind.

After. I like your method well, I pray you proceed, as you have begun.

Pedo. Well then, *neighbour*, (to begin with *motives to mortification of ſinne*) The *ground* of Infant-Baptiſm (as *I* told you) is *Gods Covenant with Anceſtors*. Now *I* ask you Neighbour, ſuppoſing you had an enmity againſt two perſons, the one upon ſome *late perſonall injury* received from him, the other not only upon a perſonall but upon an *ancient hereditary quarrell*, running in the blood, like that of the *Guelphs and Gibellines*, which of the two were likely to undergo the heavieſt ſhock of your revenge?

After. Surely the *hereditary* enemy.

Pedo. Well then apply this to the preſent caſe, To be borne under the *Covenant of Anceſtors*, renders ſinne an *hereditary* enemy, whereas without that conſideration, a mans engagement againſt it is only a *perſonall* quarrell.

And

And as for the *practiſe* of Infant-Baptiſm, no queſtion it promotes the *mortification of ſinne*, with farre more vigour and activity then the ſame received at riper years; for that enmity is moſt mortall which growes up with a man *from the very cradle*: ſurely, let a mans engagements againſt ſin otherwiſe be never ſo ſtrong, yet are they much heightened by continuance; and without all queſtion, the all-wiſe God fore-ſaw that it would be no ſmall advantage to this work of cutting off the body of the ſins of the fleſh to engage his againſt it in Infancy, as he did in Circumciſion, and particularly as to *original* Col. 2. 11
ſin, (wherein the life of ſin conſiſts.) Infant-Baptiſm (as Circumciſion of old) affords a *reall conviction* of it, and engagement againſt it; that Infants need Baptiſmall *waſhing*, proclaimes them *filthy*, even as ſoon as they are born, which (ſeeing they cannot yet become by *actuall* ſin) it remaines that they muſt needs be ſo from the *womb*. Thus the cutting off of the *fore-skins of the fleſh* of Infants of old, ſignifying the cutting off the *fore-skin of the heart*, as often as they reflected upon that Ordinance then received, the Jewes muſt needs be minded, that they brought *hearts* into the world with them that needed to be *circumciſed*. Now Baptiſm received *at yeares of diſcretion*, doth not give any particular evidence againſt *originall ſinne*, ſeeing it is adminiſtred after the commiſſion of many actuall corruptions: It muſt indeed minde them that they are *filthy*, elſe what need of *waſhing*, but that they are *filthy from the wombe*, it remembers them not, and poſſibly the renunication of Infant-Baptiſm,

(being

(being so undeniable a conviction of originall sinne) may be a cause why so many of that way, deny *originall sinne* together with *Infant-Baptisme*

Nor is it a lesse effectuall *engagement* against it; for by a person baptized in Infancy, there is a solemne league and confederacy (if I may so expresse my selfe) entered into with the Spirit of God against it to begin from that very hour, to grow up with him, and shew it selfe against all motions and affections stirred up in his heart thereby: whereas in persons baptized at riper yeares, this engagement is of a farre latter date, and by consequence more morally invalid.

And (as to actuall sinne) no question but Infant-Baptisme doth lay a very great obligation upon many persons to detest it, when they consider that they were from their cradle *buried with Christ in baptisme*, and therein engaged not to admit sin to *reign in their mortall bodies*, *Rom. 6. 12.* And therefore God thinks fit to engage them against it in that age, before they commit any, to shew them that they must begin to dye to it from thence forth, and not to admit any acquaintance with it in any succeeding part of their lives.

After. But what say you to the other part of Sanctification which consists in our *resurrection to newnesse of life?* Hath Infant-Baptisme the advantage of promoting that more then the same administration at riper years?

Peds. Yes, no question whether you look upon it in the *Graces* or *Duties* thereof. First, in the *exercising saving graces*; It promotes the actings of severall graces, as

1. Faith:

1. Faith: which I shall demonstrate.

{1. From the ground, / 2. From the practise} of Infant-Baptism.

1. The *ground* of Infant-Baptism, Gods Covenant with us in our Ancestors, carries herein great weight. It is a very usual thing for posterity to put much confidence in such an one as hath been a constant friend to the family whence they are descended: There the Psalmist, *Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place from generation to generation, and our fathers have told us what wonders thou didst in their dayes, &c.* Thence the Saints in their prayers so often act faith upon the Covenant of fore-fathers, *Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saith Moses,* Exod. 32. 13. and they do not do it rashly, for God gives sufficient ground for such a confidence in this particular. He professeth himselfe *a God shewing mercy unto thousands of generations of them that love him* (in the second Commandement) and that not barely upon their *personall* account, but upon the account of their *parents*, as he *visits the iniquity of the parents that hate him, upon the third and fourth generations*; although they be not personally partakers of their guilt. Psa. 90. 1. Psa. 44. 1.

God puts a speciall Emphasis of favour upon the people of *Israel*, when he calls them the *seed of Abraham his friend*, Isa. 41. 8. *q. d.* I owe you more favour then other, because you are the seed of a good friend of mine, and I allow you to make use of me accordingly.

And this in *spirituall* and *temporall* mercies.

In

In *spirituall* mercies, God bestows them (many times) upon the account of his Covenant with Ancestors on their children, two eminent proofs I have for it, the one is *Rom.* 11.28. where the Apostle discoursing of the calling of the Jews to Christ in the latter dayes tells the Gentiles, that it is true, God hath unchurched them, that the Gentiles might be *grafted into their place*; for (saith he) *as touching the Gospel, they are enemies for your sakes*, but they shall not alwayes continue so; for as *touching the election, the remnant which are according to the election of grace* (as he calls them *vers.* 5.) *they are beloved, i. e.* so as to be called home in Gods time, *for the Fathers sakes.* Gods Covenant with their fore-fathers reflects his speciall love upon them in conversion at so many hundred years distance; the other place is *Luke* 1.71.&c. where *Zacharias* makes Gods Covenant with the fore-fathers, the rise and spring of that great mercy, *deliverance from the hand of their enemies to serve him in righteousnes and holines before him all the dayes of your lives, vers.* 75.

After. Yea, but to this (me thinks) I see a *double objection* arising; The first is, That *Zacharias* seems rather to lay the weight of his speech upon the *particular promise* of Christ made to *Abraham*, to be fulfilled to his posterity, then upon any *hereditary priviledge* (as you seeme to intimate) accrewing to the Posterity of *Abraham* and the rest of the Fathers, by their faith, and relation to God thereby.

The second is, That though God vouchsafed such an *hereditary* priviledge to *them*, yet it may not

not without like expreſſe warrant be extended to *more* then them.

I anſwer you in a word to both; To the *firſt objection* I ſay, that it is true, that he ſpeaks of a *particular promiſe* by *Abraham*, to be fulfilled upon his Poſterity; but yet the matter of it is only a branch of the *generall Covenant*, that he would be *his God, and the God of his ſeed*; for we have no *particular* promiſe of ſanctification made to *Abraham* on the behalfe of his Poſterity, but what is included in that *generall* one. Indeed he *ſent Chriſt to take fleſh of his loines* in purſuance of a *particular promiſe*, but theſe *effects* of Chriſts ſending, *deliverance from ſpirituall enemies, &c.* are collected from the *generall promiſe*. And ſo the Apoſtle *Peter* interprets it, *Act.* 3.25. *You are* (ſaith he) *the children of the prophets, and of the Covenant made with the fathers, ſaying to Abraham, in thy ſeed ſhall all the Nations of the earth be bleſſed.* *Pædo.*

But what are they the better for this promiſe of Chriſt (the ſeed here meant) more then all the families of the earth beſides, who are as much concerned in it as they are? Yes, for they being the ſeed of *thoſe Fathers* to whom the promiſe was made, and who were then the *onely perſons in viſible covenant with God*, their ſeed (according to the generall promiſe) are dignified above others upon that account, in that *God having raiſed Jeſus ſent him* [*firſt*] mark the Emphaſis of that word *firſt*) *to turn them from their iniquities, q.d.* If any bleſſing be derived from Chriſt unto men, the firſt fruits ſhall be beſtowed upon the ſeed of the Fathers and the Prophets, ſutable to that other place. *It behoved that the word of God ſhould*

[firſt]

[first] *have been spoken to you, Act.* 13. 46. And so we finde that in their second comming in the Gentiles are every where spoken of as appendices to them.

To the *other* Objection, I say no more then was said before, that *the blessing of Abrahamis come upon the Gentiles by faith*, and by consequence if vocation, if sanctification of the Posterity of *Abraham* were a fruit of the promise, I will be thy God and the God of thy seed; it may be no lesse be claimed, by the seed of Beleevers now, then formerly.

After. You bring that Scripture more to the purpose then I imagined; but I pray you proceed in your Argument.

Pedo. I will, suppose we that *Gods Covenant with fore-fathers includes the giving grace to their seed*, & then here is a speciall ground to act faith upon, from an hereditary Covenant; and no question, if we plead it beleevingly, we may find the benefit of it.

After. But if *grace* be thus *hereditary*, how comes it to passe then, that so many of the *Seed* of Godly Parents are so graceless?

Pedo. 1. Because God bestows it *according to election*: Grace is not so hereditary as Lands and Estates are, to the children of such or such a mans body begotten, what ever they be; but it is given to the Elect Posterity, with speciall respect to the Covenant of fore-fathers, in the execution of that decree of Election. This difference the Apostle makes between Jews and Jews; the *Election have obtained it*, and *the Election are beloved for the fathers sakes*:

2. Because

2. Becauſe though there be a Covenant on *Gods part*, yet it is not (on the *parents part*) improved on the behalfe of their children as it ought to be; they do not plead it as they ſhould with God, at leaſt they do not improve it in the uſe of meanes, being too indulgent and remiſſe in their education, a meanes whereunto God hath annexed many promiſes of Grace, *Pro.* 23. 13.22,15. So *David* to *Adoniah* and *Abſalon*, he neglected their education, and God denyed the bleſſing.

Now whatever Gods ſecret decree is, we are to blame our ſelves if any promiſe do not take effect, becauſe that decree never interpoſeth to hinder the performance of a promiſe to any one that duely pleads it.

And the truth is, the Covenant with forefathers is the likely ground upon which Grace can be pleaded for on my behalfe, for ſuppoſing me in a ſtate of nature, I have no Covenant made with me in mine owne perſon; and as to Gods Covenant with Chriſt concerning me, that is a ſecret thing, and not pleadable: but my parents and the Church may plead the covenant of Anceſtors on my behalf, as I ſhall ſhew more ſatisfactorily hereafter.

And for *Temporalls*, however the former Doctrine concerning the beſtowing of *ſpiritual* graces upon a paternall Covenant, may admit of ſome diſpute; yet it is cleare enough in things of an inferiour nature, that the Lord hath promiſed and the Saints have beene encouraged in a prayer of Faith to aske them upon that account.

As to *Gods engagements* in this kinde, I might produce a crowd of speciall places to this purpose, See *Psal.* 25. 13. 37. 25, 26. *Prov.* 11. 21. so *Isa.* 65. 23. and abundance of Scriptures more.

And how frequently the *Saints* have hung upon this twig, and kept up their faith from sinking, how often they have pleaded it in prayer? I suppose is no lesse evident from Scripture. Surely it is not for nothing that in the petitions of the Saints for temporall mercies, they mention God under this notion, *O God, the God of our Fathers*, sayes *Jehoshaphat*, when he prayes against his potent and numerous enenies, 2 *Chr.* 20. 6. and *David* when he appeales to God in a case of suspicion, that the *Benjamites* were come to betray him at *Ziklag*, appeales to him under that title, *If ye be come to betray me to mine enemies, the God of our fathers look thereon and requite it:* undoubtedly *David* and *Jehoshaphat* could and did say, *my God*, yet they choose rather in straights to plead by that Title, as an additionall strength to their plea, over and above their own interest in him; and upon that account it is that they *confesse their fathers sinnes* in solemne confession, as apprehending a breach in their Fathers Covenant, till it be made up, to be a barre to their claim: As *Neh.* 9. 16, 34. & urge the faith of your parents and their experience of Gods faithfulnesse to them, *Psal.* 22. 4. *Our Fathers trusted in thee, they trusted, and thou didst deliver them*; surely it is more then if they had said of any other beleevers not related to them, *such and such trusted in thee, &c.* It is as much indeed as if they had said,

ſaid, *Lord we are of a beleeving race, and a race to whom thou haſt ſhewed abundance of ancient favors, and we hope thou wilt remember that we that ſeeke thee, now are not onely ſuch as truſt in thee our ſelves, but ſuch as deſcend from them that truſted in thee before we were borne*; And indeed (even amongſt men) it is an urgent plea for any favour, to be able to draw an inducement to any ones kindneſſe and bounty from a relation of league or friendſhip between his and our Anceſtors: Surely it a *principle of ingenuity*, ſo wrought in *David*, that he could not but remember to do *kindneſſe to Mephiboſheth for his father Jonathans ſake*, as 2 *Sam.*9.7. We cannot think but there are ſome *remnants of love in Gods* breaſt towards the poſterity of his old friends, when they are dead and gone. It is likely that all the while that the remembrance of *Joſeph* laſted in *Egypt*, the *Iſraelites* were well-intreated for his ſake; for the very preface that is made to the ſtory of their oppreſſion, *Exo.*1.8. *There roſe up a new King in Egypt that knew not Joſeph*, intimateth that it would have bin an incredible thing that any King of *Egypt*, knowing *Joſeph*, would have dealt ſo with his poſterity. And *Benhadad* is ſent to by *Aſa* to do him a kindneſſe. *There is an ancient league* (ſaith he) *between my Father and thy Father*, 1 *Kings* 15. 19. Surely, if ſuch pleas from parentall relations work upon the bowels of *men*, the ſeed of *Gods* friends may be more confident that the like pleas wil ſteed them with him, becauſe he is of tenderer bowels then any creature can be, and more apt to take to heart ſuch principles of ingenuity and good nature (if I may ſo expreſſe my ſelf) then we are.

After. I fully assent to you in these particulars, that Gods Covenant with our parents is a good plea for faith to urge; but all this discourse supposeth the persons that are the urgers of it to be believers themselves; but what is this to *Infants* who cannot plead this Covenant, nor beleeve, and whom our present discourse concerns?

Pæd. Yes, very much, for it supposeth their *interest* in that Covenant before they could plead it, seeing they plead by *right of succession*: Now he that pleads a right of succession among men, supposeth he had a right before he could plead; so the Apostle speaking of the *heir under age*, who cannot legally sue for his estate, yet saith he, *he is Lord of all*, *Gal.* 4. 1. Surely had not the Covenant of God with the Fathers, here spoken of, concerned your posterity, even then when they were born, they could never have pleaded a title to God of such antiquity when they came to years; besides, you must consider that I am now speaking of the advantage which the Covenant of God with fore-fathers, and his relation to them, as it undergoes an abstracted consideration from the personall Covenant with us by faith, affords to the strengthening of faith when we have it; that I may shew that we have good cause not to renounce our Infant-relation to Gods Covenant, which Anabaptists generally do.

After. But *Sir*, I remember you promised to lay the comparison between the advantage, that the consideration of *paternall relation* to God gives to faith, and that which emergeth from *personall relation*; for suppose *David* plead the Covenant of

of *fore-fathers*, and *Jeboſhaphat* and others do ſo to; might they not with as much ſtrength of faith have pleaded Gods Covenant made with *themſelves* at the time of their converſion?

I have anſwered you partly to that before, and ſay further here, they *could not*, becauſe they *did not*, I think is a good argument in this caſe; the Saints do not uſe to ſpeak vain and non-ſignificant words to God in prayer. Had they had ſo much hold upon God by the plea of *my God*, or *our God*, they would not (undoubtedly) have added alſo that of [*The God of their fathers.*] Beſides, in reaſon judge you, Is it nothing when I can come to God and ſay, *Lord, there is an ancient Covenant between my fore-fathers and thee, and mutuall friendſhip hath run in a line from many generations down to me as ſoon as I had a being; nay, thou waſt beſpoken on my behalfe to be a friend to me before I was able to ſpeak for my ſelfe, my godly father a dear friend of thine, made many a motion on my behalfe, he pleaded a Covenant entayled, he put it in ſuite for me when I was but a ſpan long, and he intruſted me upon that Covenant, and committed me to the ſociety of the faithfull, as Guardians and Feoffees in truſt to ſee me poſſeſſed of it; and now (Lord) I am by their endeavours and thy bleſſing upon them, enſtated therein: I have a great favour to aske at thy hands, and I queſtion whether my own perſonall plea will carry it with that prevalency which I deſire, I am many wayes unworthy to plead with thee mine own title; to fortifie it therefore, Lord look back upon the dayes of old, and read over the petitions which are yet on file on my behalfe, and thy gracious anſwers to them, when as yet my bones were onely written in thy* Pedo.

book. Let it never be said that one descended of such a prayerfull race is cast out of thy favour, and the prayers of that race become unsuccessfull to me, on whose behalfe they were put up, and are upon the file in thy Court of Requests.

After. But may not one that is baptized at *yeares of discretion*, plead all this, as well as one baptized in *Infancy*; (supposing the plea be well grounded) Why then is this produced to shew the usefulnesse of Infant-Baptisme above Baptisme of riper age?

Pedo. I told you once before, that I am now shewing you the benefit of holding *the ground* of Infant-Baptism, to wit, a relation to God by the Covenant of our fore-fathers before we were borne, which Anabaptists generally deny as well as the practise of it; and I shall methodically descend to the *practise* it selfe anon. However, because it may be needfull for your satisfaction, now and then to be a little immethodicall, I shall not deny you to interpose now and then what you apprehend may stumble you, and swallow the inconveniency for your advantage.

To answer you therefore to this question, although a beleever when ever baptized, may make this plea as well as one baptized in Infancy (for the fault of parents in this case is no prejudice to the child, in the substance of it) yet it is morally and rationally more conducing to the frequent bringing of it to *remembrance*, and (so) to the frequent *improvement* of it, to retaine in the Church the practise of Infant-Baptism, because Infant-Baptism doth most peculiarly, and abstractedly

ſtractedly lead to the conſideration of this Covenant of Anceſtors, which is the plea in hand, then Baptiſm at riper yeares doth; ſeeing that Coveuant is the proper ground upon which it is adminiſtred; ſo that as often as a childe is Baptized in my ſight, or I reflect upon mine own Infant-Baptiſm, I cannot but ſo often reflect upon the Covenant of fore-fathers, and have very warme occaſionall hints ſuggeſted to me thereby, for the improvement of it in the way aforeſaid.

Hereby *Sir*, you minde me that there is one branch of your promiſe as to this particular behind, which you will give me leave to mind you of; you have ſhewed how the ground of Infant-Baptiſm conduceth to the furtherance of the actings of faith, and have given ſome collateral evidence how the *practiſe* of it doth ſo to; I pray proceed in that Argument. *After.*

I will, for indeed I longed to come to it long ſince, but that your diſſatisfactions have delayed me, and therefore I ſhall the more willingly undertake it; but upon condition that you muſt not a new interrupt me in this diſcourſe, with queſtions concerning the right of Infants to Baptiſm, or the Covenant of it in Infancy; ſeeing our diſcourſe proceeds upon a *ſuppoſal* hereof (at leaſt for diſcourſe ſake) for I ſhall not ſo far forfeit my diſcretion as to diſpute whether that which is indeed no Ordinance, be not more effectuall to ſtrengthen faith, then that that is ſo indeed, but let that lye between us. You ſay, or at leaſt queſtion, whether you may not ſay, that Baptiſme received at yeares of diſcretion, is the *Pædo.*

onely Ordinance of Baptiſm. I ſay that Infant-Baptiſme is no leſſe an Ordinance then that; I allow you to plead for your Baptiſme all that you can, ſuppoſing it be as you ſay; allow me (upon my ſuppoſition) to ſay what I can for my Baptiſm, and you ſhall be judge your ſelf where the advantage in this iſſue lyes, on your ſide or mine.

After. Take your condition and proceed.

Pædo. Firſt then, (as to the ſtrengthening of Faith by the practiſe of Infant-Baptiſm (in *generall*) the *object* of Baptiſmall Faith is, *God in Covenant through the blood of Chriſt Sacramentally applied in Baptiſm*, and by conſequence Faith, in relation to Baptiſm is to look upon that Covenant, and to fetch thence (with ſpeciall reſpect to the ſecurity of that Seale adminiſtred to ſtrengthen it) all the benefits of the Covenant.

Secondly, (in *generall* alſo) Faith in all its *acts* receiveth a ſpecial confirmation from *experience*, long acquaintance with a friend, and long relation to him, is a very great inducement to truſt him.

More *particularly*, ſeeing the matter of the Covenant on Gods part in Baptiſm, which Covenant is the object of Baptiſmall Faith, is ſuch as containes *ſpiritualls* and *temporalls*, we ſhall (as before) conſider them in their order; and if Infant-Baptiſme in both theſe afford ſuch arguments of corroboration to our faith, as I have ſpoken of more then Baptiſm at riper years, then I hope I ſhall competently diſcharge this part of my undertaking alſo.

After. I expect what you will ſay.

As to *ſpiritualls* then, ſuch as remiſſion of ſins, renewing Grace, mortification of the old man, putting on of the new ſupplies of Grace, from the Fountain head, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt (all which are eminently comprized in the Baptiſmall Covenant) a man when he comes to yeares of diſcretion, may plead the Covenant for theſe the more ſtrongly for his Infant-Baptiſm, *Lord, didſt thou engage to beſtow theſe graces upon me in my infancy, when I could not aske, nor ſo much as deſire them, and will the Lord not beſtow them upon me now I am a ſuitor for them? would he be found of me ſo far as to promiſe and ſeal a deed of gift conferring a right to theſe mercies when I ſonght him not, and will he not be found of me, ſo as to conferre poſſeſſion upon me when I ſeek him?* *Pædo.*

And truly, for ſome of theſe graces, *viz. Initial graces*, ſuch as remiſſion of ſins, regeneration, and renovation of the heart, it hath made me very much a friend to Infant-Baptiſm, to conſider that Baptiſm is an *initiall Sacrament*, to ſeal the beſtowing of theſe *initiall graces* on Gods part; and therefore I verily perſwade my ſelfe it was not *onely* intended for Infants, but intended *principally* for them, ſeeing to elder perſons it could not properly be a ſeal of conferring *initiall grace* upon them, beauſe it ſuppoſeth that *already beſtowed on and wrought* in them as a qualification for the reception of that Ordinance: And although the generality of thoſe we read of in the New Teſtament, were admitted to Baptiſm at that age, and it may ſeem that it reflects ſome diſparagement upon the wiſedome of God to appoint the uſe of ſuch an Ordinance to them

to whom (being already converted) it was defective in one principall part of its signification & use, yet if we compare the state of the Church then to be gathered with the state of the old Church when it begun in *Abram* and his family, we shall find God ordered it in the same manner in relation to the administration of the *Seale of admission* then instituted. The generality of those then admitted, being grown persons, received the sign of Circumcision, though as defective to them in that part of its signification, which is supposed in the present case to be wanting in the Baptism of grown persons: for Circumcision no lesse engages Gods Covenant for the collation of pardoning and regenerating grace, then Baptism doth, *Col.* 2. 11, 12.

And as for all *supplies of after-grace*, such as the actuall assurance of pardon received, the actuall mortification of lusts, and actuall quickening of grace, against particular delayes and weaknesses, the plea of Infant-Baptism is very prevalent; for although Baptism at riper age, seal the Covenant (as to these particulars) as well as Baptisme in infancy, yet doth it not give a like *morall assurance* of the constancy and firmnesse of that part of it which confirmes the people of God against fears of being deserted by him, as the reception of it in Infant-Age doth: for by the same reason upon which the Saints are many times faine to appeale from *conditionall* promises and comforts to *absolute*, *viz.* The freenesse of electing, justifying and renewing grace in the respective declarations, and offers of them, upon the same reason may they have recourse to Infant-baptism, the most

moſt lively repreſentation and obſignation of both theſe.

Now we know that the Saints, when they looke upon Gods engagements to give them comforting and preſerving grace, being told (as they are by that note of naturall Arminaniſme that is in them) that God is engaged to beſtow them only upon ſuch and ſuch conditions, and being (withall) conſcious that they have failed, and ſtill faile in thoſe conditions; they have no reliefe in this caſe, but to flye to the records of the eternall love of God to them, and the freeneſſe of juſtifying and renewing grace (as I ſaid before) and thence they conclude ſtrongly, that he who (when he fore-ſaw how unworthy they would prove of any favour from him, and how they would perpetually faile of their duty to him) did (yet) elect them, and beſtow grace and Chriſt upon them freely, will alſo now *heal their back-ſlidings, and love them* a like *freely* to the end, *Hoſ.* 14. 4.

This therefore being their refuge, if Gods *ſeal* adde (as it doth undoubtedly to us) any certainty to his word, then (ſurely) for ſuch perſons to reflect upon the ſeale of Baptiſme adminiſtred to them in Infancy, muſt needs fortifie them in that refuge; for in ſuch a caſe (me thinks) thus could I plead with God for perſeverance, and ſupplies neceſſary thereunto.

Lord, the Covenant which thou madeſt with and ſealed to mein Infancy, makes over all the graces and benefits of thy Covenant to me, not onely the firſt, but the laſt, the ſeed of renewing, and the harveſt of preſerving and crowning grace; I am now told that though

though I have received the first, notwithstanding any wants and obstructions on my part; yet my own defects and weaknesses, and sinnes, may defeat me of the last, and so my latter end may be worse then the beginning. Lord, didst thou not see when thou madest this Covenant with me that I was an Infant wallowing in blood and pollution, the guilt and puddle of originall sin, having no good in me, nor capable of any, farther then thou shouldst afterwards infuse it by a new creation, surely thou didst? and if thou didst then see what I was, and fore-see what I would be, and yet wouldst make and seale that Covenant to me notwithstanding: shall I conceive that the falling out of what thou didst fore-see, can change thee from what thou art, notwithstanding that fore-sight, didst engage thy selfe to be?

The like plea doth not offer it selfe from the meditation of Baptism received at *riper age*, because though the Covenant it seales be the same Covenant, and no lesse free, yet the person to whom it is administred, is at the administration supposed to be under an *actuall qualification, viz.* of *faith and repentance*, and therefore though they may draw the same support and comfort from the Covenant, yet not from the Ordinance. And now (*neighbour*) what think you, hath not Infant-Baptism the advantage herein over baptism at riper yeares, to strengthen faith upon Gods Covenant for Spiritualls?

After. I dare not determine so suddenly (Sir) in an argument so new to me as this is; but I conceive it deserves serious consideration, which (by Gods help) I shall bestow upon it: in the mean time if you have any thing more to adde herein,

herein, I pray, go on therewithall.

I pray do, conſider it throughly, for I propound it to that end, not for diſpute, but for meditation; onely, I deſire you to take in one thing more with you, on this head which I had almoſt forgotten. *Pædo.*

What is that? *After.*

It is this, That Infant relation to God, yields a conſiderable ſtrength to *faith in a tempted condition*, againſt thoſe ſpiritual enemies, which ſeek to devoure the ſoul therein; for here faith may apply it ſelfe to God thus. *Pædo.*

Lord, Satan tells me I am one of his Subjects, a goat of his fold; but Lord, doſt thou not know that I have had thy ſheep-mark upon me from a Lamb, that I was born in thy family, and ſolemnly owned for thy Subject and Servant, by thy Miniſter in thy Name before the Congregation, wilt thou loſe one that hath bin thine ſo long? Kings uſe to be moſt tender of their Native Subjects, and Shepheards of the Sheep of their own race: ſhall thy native Subjects be more open to inſolencies of enemies then others?

But Sir, doth difference of time make any alteration upon God, ſo as to lay upon him a greater obligation to one who hath been *longer* in his family, then to another who came more lately into it; I thought to the *Father of Eternity* there had been no diffeeence between to day and an hundred years ſince. *After.*

So think I, but you are to remember that I now treat not of conſiderations prevailing with God, but conſiderations working upon us; not ſuch as further *him* in point of *faithfulneſs*, but ſuch as further *us* in point of *faith*. Now ſuch things *Pædo.*

things may be of precious use to *us*, as are not of a like influence *upon God*: All the Arguments we urge in prayer do not at all move God, but only fortifie our faith to depend upon him. So here, though God have a like reason in himselfe to move him to take care of a soul that became one of his family but *yesterday* as of one that hath bin in his family *forty years* or upwards, yet it must needs be a more rationall *encouragement to us* to depend upon him *now*, that we have been related *so long* to him, then it would be to have begun a relation but *yesterday*.

After. Well Sir, I shall hang up this upon the file also, among those other heads which I mean to take time to look over more particularly; but I shall not hinder your present progresse in the intended Argument. I pray you proceed to that part of it wherein you undertake the discovery of an advantage ground for faith to act upon, in *Temporalls* as well as *Spiritualls*, within the Territories of *Infant-Baptism*.

Pæd. I will, *neighbour*, (although I conceive that much of that labour is saved already, by proving it in *spiritualls*; for it is an easie conclusion, and that which all *Scripture*, as well as *Reason* allows, to inferre the certainty of *Temporalls* from *Spiritualls*, the security we have for the *greater* is sufficient for the *less*) go along with me therefore in a few words on this head; and I know not why I should not take the rise of this argument from the example of *David*, whose faith (to me) seemes to take its rise from the ground wee are speaking of, *viz.* Gods Covenant-engagement to him in infancy (whereof Circumcision then was

and

and Baptiſme now is a confirming ſigne) The places are, *Pſal.* 22. 9, 10, 11. He begs for a temporall mercy, *deliverance from his enemies*, under whom he was ſo grievouſly afflicted, that he was therein *a fit Type of Chriſt upon the croſſe*, to whom therefore many paſſages of this Pſalme are applyed in the Goſpel. He urgeth many arguments of faith in this caſe, and among the chiefeſt he pleads thus, *Lord, thou art he that took me out of the womb, thou didſt make me hope when I was upon my mothers breaſts; I was caſt upon thee from the wombe, thou art my God from my mothers belly; be not farre from me, &c.*

And what is there in all this? he ſeems to me to plead only from the experience of *providential preſervations* which he had had former experience of, even *from the womb*; but I ſee nothing in the Text from whence to conclude that he had (ſo much as in his eye) *any Covenant-relation* to God from *his mothers belly*, much leſſe, any *Seale of that Covenant*, adminiſtred to him then. *After.*

Say you ſo? let me ſee then what I can make of it to the purpoſe in hand. You conceive *David* being a *Jew, was circumciſed the eight day*, as other Jewes by the Commandement of God were. *Pædo.*

Yes. *After.*

Then ſurely he was in Covenant from that time, for *Circumciſion was the token of the Covenant, Gen.* 17. *Pædo.*

Suppoſe that, yet he may not plead that Covenant here. *After.*

Surely if he did not, yet it concerned him to do ſo (as I beleeve you alſo will grant, when you conſi- *Pædo.*

conſider, that *depth of miſery* he was in, then wch we cannot imagine a greater, and it concerned faith now to *muſter up all its ſtrength*) ſurely he was too wiſe to leave any of his moſt uſeful furniture behinde him when he was to deale with ſuch a tentation. This may be a probable Argument for my interpretation (at leaſt) in generall.

But adde to this (in particular)

One part of *Davids* complaint in this Pſalme is, that *God his God had forſaken him*, verſ. 1. And indeed this ſtung him beyond all other his afflictions, and his enemies ſcoffe at him for *rolling himſelf on the Lord*, verſ. 8. reproaching him with his faith in God. Surely this will evince. that *David* in this Pſalm addreſſeth himſelfe to God, as his God, a God in Covenant with him, and begs for deliverance as a *Covenant mercy*.

Now, reduce the plea he makes, *verſ.* 9, 10. to this ſenſe, and it will be impertinent and weak, if it be grounded *onely* on *providentiall intereſt* in God from his *mothers wombe*; for this were to make *David* argue with God at this rate, *Lord, why haſt thou forſaken me?* that is, *why doſt thou not ſhew me the favour that thou ſheweſt to thy children? be not far from me*, that is, *give me a Covenant deliverance, I chalenge thee upon thy faithfulneſs to deliver me in this ſtraight, according to my truſt in thee*; *for thou haſt* providentially, (to wit, *upon the ſame account, upon which thou doſt take care for the children of Pagans, and the young callow-brood of ravens, when they cry*) *taken me out of the wombe, and cauſed me to hope when I was upon my mothers breaſts.* Were not this think you a very forcible

forcible plea for *ſpeciall* faith, to urge an Argument that takes its riſe from a ground common to all Gods creatures? and would it any way follow (in reaſon) that God muſt not faile *Davids* truſt now, becauſe he had *providentially* preſerved him *from his mothers belly?* Is God bound to *preſerve* all thoſe, nay, to ſhew *ſpeciall favour* to them at all times of their lives when they have need of him, whom he thus breeds and preſerves *from their mothers belly?*

The Argument therefore runs plainly thus, *Lord, thou art my God now upon the ſame title by which thou haſt been from my mothers belly, &c. and thou haſt the ſame obligations of the Covenant, by which thou waſt my God then, upon thee now I have found thee faithfull to that Covenant hitherto, be ſo ſtill. Will the God that hath been my God from the wombe, and from my mothers belly, forſake me now? will he break Covenant now who hath kept it ſo long?* Thus the plea of *Davids* faith is like the Sun *going forth in its ſtrength*, with light and warmth, enough to cheere his fainting ſpirits in this ſad plunge, and *valley of the ſhadow of death.*

Now (*neighbour*) to reduce this example to our preſent buſineſſe; Suppoſe I ſhould be in any want, under any affliction or calamity whatſoever; would it not be worth the while to encourage faith in prayer by a like Argument.

Lord, I have been caſt upon thee (by my Parents dedicating me to thee in baptiſm) from the womb, and thou haſt (by ſealing a Covenant to me) been my God from my mothers belly, I was not without a ſufficient ground of hoping in thee when I hung upon my mothers breaſt; for then I was taken into thy family, and became

became thy charge, and thou becameſt my Father and my God; and ever ſince, from that time to this, thou haſt on thy part held that Covenant inviolated, thou haſt given me grace in purſuance of it, and all other good things, and wilt thou not continue the ſame line of mercy and bounty to me all my dayes? what wilt thou who haſt holden me up from the womb, and been my truſt and hope from my youth, caſt me off now, though I am old and gray-headed? Pſal. 71. 5,6,9. 27.18. *Will not God take care for ancient Servants? will he provide the leſſe for them becauſe their work is done, and they are grown children againe, who tooke them into his family before they could work at all, and bred them from children therein?* ſurely a ſerious heart knowes the advantage of ſuch conſiderations too well to part with them ſleightly.

Is there not great oddes between this plea, and the plea of another man, who can only (evidentially, I mean, and legally) urge a relation to Gods family for one, two, three, four, or a few more yeares? and ſure the plea of perſons baptized at yeares of diſcretion, muſt fall ſhort of that of *David* by divers yeares.

After. Yet ſtill, *Sir*, me thinks it ſticks with me, that had not *David* been *circumciſed at eight dayes old*, he had had the *ſame plea*, and (by conſequence) a man not having been baptized in Infancy, may ſay all this which you ſpeak of, except you will deny any to be in the Covenant before they are Baptized, or to have been heretofore in Covenant before they were circumciſed, and then you renounce your owne ſureſt footing for Pædobaptiſm, and come home to the Anabaptiſts.

Pæd. I muſt anſwer you again, as I did before, that though

though every one that is a child of a beleever had formerly, and ſtill hath a Covenant-right to God before Circumciſion and Baptiſme; and ſo every ſuch perſon circumciſed or uncircumciſed, baptized or unbaptized, (at leaſt as long as the neglect is not his own fault) hath the *ſame plea* which we have been ſpeaking of, yet he hath it not to urge with the *ſame evidence* and ground of *aſſurance*, as he that can plead the Covenant with the ſeal, hath: and ſo ſtill (as to that I am ſpeaking of, the footing of faith in ſuch a caſe) he comes ſhort of my *David*, or *beleever*, who in his Infancy was not only *in Covenant*, but a *ſealed Covenanter*; otherwiſe it muſt needs follow, that the Sacraments adde nothing at all to the Covenant in point of *certainty* and *evidence*, which I think no ſober Chriſtian will affirme. Wherefore I pray you carry this explication and diſtinction along with you through the remaining part of our diſcourſe, and apply it *mutatis mutandis*, changing the termes as there ſhall be cauſe, as often as you ſee a like doubt ariſing in you, that we may avoid needleſſe repetitions, as much as is poſſible.

After. I will Sir, as I ſhall be able, & when I do not, it ſhall be enough for you to mind me of it, and I will correct my ſelf for adding any unneceſſary trouble to you in that kinde. I pray therefore proceed to ſhew the ſame advantage adminiſtred to *other graces* in their actings from Infant-Baptiſm, as you have done in reference to *Faith* already; wherein I aſſure you (though I am not yet beyond ſome doubt as to ſome things you have ſaid by the way, whereof I may put you to

the trouble of giving a further satisfaction another time, yet) I have received such *props of faith*, as I hope I shall upon occasion make very good use of, and if you can shew me as much in other graces, I shall not look so very sleightly upon Infant-Baptism as some, through *carelessenes* and spirituall *negligence*, not looking into it as they should, and *others* through the *prejudice* of a contrary judgement, do.

Pædo. I proceed therefore to a second grace (wherein if I do not give in as large evidence to the usefulnesse of Infant-Baptism, as in reason you can expect, I shall be doubly to blame, *partly* for failing in mine undertaking, and *partly* for hazarding the successe of so good a work begun in you, as you give me hope of, *viz.* your full satisfaction) and that grace is

11. **Repentance**, or *godly sorrow for sinne*, with the attendants of it, *humiliation*, *caution*.

As to sorrow and *humiliation*, there is this two-fold ground advanced from Infant-Baptism. (1) From the *kindnesse of God*, shewed to the parties therein, and that upon a double account,

1. As Infant-Baptisme reflecteth upon him under the consideration of the *God of our fathers*. And this hath so much prevalency in it to draw penitent teares from an ingenuous heart (and grace is a principle of greatest ingenuity) that the Saints of God in their most solemn humiliations, insist very much upon it. Thus when *Nehemiah* begins a solemn confession of sin, he aggravates it by *Gods mercies to Abraham, and their fore-fathers*, for a great part of the chapter,

Neh.

*Neh.*9. And God himſelfe frequently aggravates *Iſraels* ſinne, by this conſideration, *They forſooke the God of their Fathers*, 2 *Chron.* 7. 22. 24. 24, 28, 6. 30. 7.

2. As it reflects upon the mercy of our owne *perſonall relation to God in Infancy* And. ſurely when God aggravates the ſinne of his people *Iſrael*, *Ezek.* 16 under the ſimilitude of a *child* taken into his ſpeciall care from the very wombe, he layes a ſufficient ground for the deducing of this concluſion; *That for any perſon or people, ſo related to God from Infancy, as he there expreſſeth, to depart from God by ſinning againſt him, is a very great aggravation of ſin.* Nay, I have ſome ground to think that the Lord takes the riſe of that aggravation of that Nations ſinnes from the very mercy of nationall circumciſion; for (to my mind) *verſ.* 8. ſpeaks much to that purpoſe, but I lay no great weight upon that, onely I will be more bold (upon the former ground) to draw up a parallell enditement from the chapter againſt a particular Jew circumciſed in Infancy, and then bring it down to the preſent caſe. Suppoſe God therefore pleading againſt any ſinner of the Jews Nation in the ſtrain of that chapter, and you will ſee it yeeld as great aggravations of *perſonall* ſins as *nationall*.

Thou N. *in the day in which thou waſt born waſt naked, and in thy blood utterly naked and deſtitute of originall righteouſneſs, and defiled with the ſtaine and guilt of originall ſin, an object of loathing and abhorrency to a pure and holy God as I am; yet when I paſſed by thee, and ſaw thee polluted in thine owne blood, I ſaid, unto thee when thou waſt in thy blood,*

live: yea, I ſaid unto thee, when thou waſt in thy blood live: when I paſſed by thee and looked upon thee, behold! (and wonder at my goodneſs therein) thy time (even that time) was a time of love, and I ſpread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedneſs; yea, I ſware to thee in circumciſion, *and entered into covenant with thee*, ſaith the Lord, *and thou becameſt mine, and I waſhed thee with water*, &c. *and I brid thee at my coſt*, under my Ordinances, *from that day, yet haſt thou forgotten all this kindneſs, and rebelled againſt me.* Alter the word *Circumciſion* into *Baptiſm*, and make the application to your ſelfe, and then ſee whether it do not afford a cutting aggravation of ſin. * Anabaptiſts yeeld no ſuch aggravation of ſin, for it allows no man any ſpeciall relation to God, no Covenant, no engaging Ordinance, no peculiar Covenant-mercy, till actual faith, *i. e.* till years of diſcretion. The ſinnes of thoſe who are born within the Church, to the Anabaptiſt have no other aggravations then the ſins of meer Heathens, till they come to believe.

2. A ſecond ground of *humiliation* from Infant-Baptiſm, is from the conſideration of the *Apoſtacy*, that (upon that account) is in the bowels of every ſuch perſons ſin, as was then admitted into Covenant with God. And me thinks, I may to very good purpoſe write bitter things againſt *ſins of youth* upon this ground; *Ah wretch! did God enter thee in his ſchoole, nay, admit thee into his family from a child, did he in much mercy make thee a Covenanter with himſelfe, and when thou couldſt not engage for thy ſelf, did he accept of thy parents and ſurties engagement on thy behalfe? hath he*

ever

ever ſince looked upon thee as a Covenanter, and dealt with thee as a friend? and yet (for all this) *thou haſt no ſooner been able to ſpeak or go, but thou haſt ſpoken lies againſt him, and gone aſtray from him; yea, ſince thou haſt been capable of underſtanding thy way, thou haſt contrary to the duty of thy naturall Alleageance, entred into a contrary Covenant, and confederacy with the Divill and Death, and thine own luſts, and maintained a warre with this God, with abundance of youthfull heat and activity, all the blood and ſpirits that run through thy youthfull veines have boyled againſt him. O ſinner! remember whence thou art fallen, and repent, and renew thy Covenant with God, before by more rivetted and aggravated Apoſtacies thou provoke him to caſt thee out of his Covenant altogether, and deale with thee as thou haſt dealt with him.* Now the Anabaptiſt hath no ſuch conſideration to aggravate ſinnes of youth *before actuall faith or Baptiſm*, ſeeing he ownes no ſuch obligation to God till *perſonall* covenanting at a mans converſion or Baptiſm, or both, at years of diſcretion.

And now I ſpeak of *converſion at yeares of diſcretion*, me thinkes, the conſideration of ones Baptiſmall Covenant in Infancy; ſhould much promote it, when a man conſiders the *reaſonableneſs* of it, the mercy vouchſafed in it, (and that *preventing* which conſideration addes much to mercy) and a mans owne provoking *apoſtacies* from it, in my judgement there is much to be ſaid from hence to advance actuall converſion.

But *Sir*, I cannot ſee the reaſon of this aggravation of ſinne, that it is an Apoſtacy from *After-*

a Covenant which I am onely engaged in, by the *interpretation* or *acceptation* of another. Infants do not *personally* covenant with God, how then can after-sins, be charged upon them as *Apostacies*.

Pæd. I answer you in a word, because the *Covenant* then undertaken on their behalf, and sealed upon their persons in Baptisme, is no other then what became a *duty* incumbent upon them, as soon as they had a being. For being (according to our principles which I am to suppose (you know) in this comparative discourse) God is in covenant with him as soon as he is a living childe in the wombe, and God is Sacramentally and solemnly engaged to him in Baptism as soon as he is borne; now all Covenants of this nature do suppose a duty of *restipulation* or *repromission* on our part: That then which by duty, such a child owes to God, is by a kind of *gracious prolepsis*, (seeing he cannot do it in his own person) accepted on his behalfe, by his parents or sureties, that so (for want of signing the Covenant on both parts) he be not cut off from the benefits of the Covenant, for so long time as he shall continue under age; and he is afterwards to take this as a *great addition* of mercy, that God dealt so graciously with him, and that (in right of such a preventionall Covenant) he hath had so long a standing in the visible Church, as a member of that body, under the speciall eye and care and prayers of that society; which (surely) is no small mercy. And thus you see that that very thing which you except against the former discourse doth very much strengthen it.

I confeſſe upon your grounds it doth ſo, I pray therefore proceed (in the next place) to the advantage which Infant-Baptiſm brings to the promoting of holy *caution* and watchfulneſſe againſt ſin for time to come; the other part of *Repentance*. *After.*

My buſineſſe herein is very much prevented by what hath been ſaid upon the former head; for undoubtedly what promotes godly *ſorrow* for ſinnes paſt, muſt needs be a ſpeciall *Antidote* againſt ſin for the future; and yet if you pleaſe (for evidence ſake) we will recollect the former conſiderations, and charge them home once more, to do execution *forwards* as well as *backwards*, againſt ſin for time to *come*, as well as for time *paſt*. *Luther* tells us a ſtory of a Virgin that was wont to reſiſt temptations with this anſwer, *Baptizata ſum, I am baptized*, (Satan) *and being waſhed, ſhall I with the ſow wallow in the mire againe?* I confeſſe, this is a prevalent caution from the *generall* conſideration of Baptiſm; but I am much miſtaken if it conclude not more forcibly, when ſtrengthened with this *ſpeciall* circumſtance of the time of the Adminiſtration which we are now handling. Thus, *Shall I ſin againſt an ancient friend, mine and my fathers God? Shall I ſell the inheritance of my fathers?* 1 Kings 21. 3, 4. *Forſake my fathers friend.* Prov. 27. 10. *Shall I break an old Covenant ſtruck with him from the cradle? Shall I now forſake my maſter in whoſe houſe I was born, and admitted to the privileges of his family as ſoon as I was borne? Shall I now be reconciled to ſin, to which I was a ſworn enemy from my mothers breaſt? God did me the greateſt* *Pæd.*

kindneſſe I was capable of in my Infancy, and what wrong hath he done me ſince that time that I ſhould now entertain a motion of unfaithfulneſs to him? God hath been my maſter theſe fourſcore years (ſaid old *Polycarpus*) *and he hath all this while done me no hurt, and ſhall I forſake him now?* Surely all the *arrows* in the *quiver* of Anabaptiſme will not pierce ſo deep into the heart of a tentation, as this will.

By this time, I hope, I have performed my undertaking in this part alſo concerning *Repentance*; and what is ſaid in theſe two graces *faith* and *repentance*, I ſhall not need to tell you that all *other graces* of the Spirit are deeply concerned in, ſeeing they all fight under their banners, either by way of *influence*, or *concomitance*, or *conſequence*; ſo that I think it needleſſe labor to inſtance in more, except your diſſatisfaction require it; for the ſake whereof, I ſhall not think it loſt labour to repeat what hath been ſaid over and over, but upon any other account I ſhall not think it neceſſary to enlarge.

After. Sir, I am, I conceive, able to ſave you the labour of what you have *to ſay*, from what you *have ſaid*; and therefore am very willing to give your diſcourſe a diſmiſſion from this head of the *improvement of graces* from the principles and practiſe of Infant-Baptiſm: As *I* remember it yet remaines that you ſay as much in reference to the *duties of a new life*, as you have concerning the graces.

Pæd. *I* confeſs, that part of my task is yet behind, but *I* hope *I* ſhal diſpatch that too, with the more eaſe, out of the proviſions *I* have already laid in

in for it in the former part of our diſcourſe. In a word then,

Duties of a new life are either

1. Such, as *directly*, *primarily*, and *immediately* terminate in God.
2. or ſuch as *mediately*, *ſecondarily*, and *indirectly* reſpect him.

Of the *former* ſort are all *duties of Religion* ſtrictly ſo called, duties of the *firſt Table*.

Of the *latter* ſort are *Duties of Relation*, duties of the *ſecond Table*.

[*Firſt*,] Concerning *Duties of the firſt Table*, exerciſes of practicall godlineſſe, and ſuch as concern the immediate ſervice of God, ſurely it was no *idle phraſe* which the Apoſtle *Paul* uſed, when he gives an account of the manner of his life before *Felix*, in theſe termes, *after the manner which they call Hereſie, ſo ſerve I the* [*God of my Fathers*] Act. 24. 14. & when *Iſrael* ſings a ſong of praiſe to God, the title they give God, is the ſame, *He is* [*my Fathers God*] *and I will exalt him*, Exod. 15. 2. which is (to me) an expreſſion of a more then ordinary *Emphaſis*, becauſe it is added to [*my God*;] *Hee is* [*my God*] *and I will prepare him an habitation*; *He is* (*moreover*) [*my Fathers God*,] *and I will exalt him*. Surely theſe holy men thought themſelves obliged to ſerve and worſhip God (beyond others) upon the account of that *Hereditary* relation to God, which the grounds of our infant-Baptiſme hold forth (as is before declared) and thoſe of Anabaptiſme deny. *Born Heathens*, though God were (it may be) very *providentially* gracious to their *Fathers*, yet when they are converted, never call

him their *Fathers God*, but this is a phraſe peculiar to thoſe that are *born in the Church*, and ſo an obligation lying upon them beyond others, to ſerve him. A ſtrain of like nature is that expreſſion of *Davids* Pſal. 116. 16, 17, *O Lord I am thy ſervant, I am thy ſervant*, doubly thy ſervant, becauſe upon a double obligation, by *perſonall covenant*, and *naturall relation*, as being the *ſon of thine hand maid*, born in thy houſe, and upon that account thine by the *Law*, Exod. 21. 4. wherein the children of a *ſervant* are her *maſters*. And from this obligation he reſolves upon duty, v. 17, 18, 19.

And then, as to *perſonall title* to God from *infancy*, I hope ſuch meditations as theſe have now and then done *me* good, and poſſibly they may do *you* no leſſe, in quickening and exciting to Duty. *Soul! How comes it to paſſe, that thou doeſt ſo little, ſo ſlightly, for God. Art thou grown weary of thy old maſter? ſurely, he hath deſerved better at thy hands, then that thou ſhou'dſt be ſo remiſſe in ſervice, now thou haſt age, and underſtanding to ſerve him, who took thee into his houſe and family, and made thee partaker of the priviledges, and proviſions of it, many yeares before thou couldſt do any thing for him; From thy infancy to thy ripe age (if not longer) he was at the charge of keeping thee, and had never a jot of ſervice from thee. Is it no mercy, that he, ſo good a maſter, did not leave thee to thine own choyce, unimaged, till thou waſt of age to chooſe whom thou wouldſt ſerve? ſurely, if there be any advantage in his ſervice, (as thou knoweſt, there is more then thou canſt imagine) how happy waſt thou in ſuch a maſter, as ſecured thee from the hazardous choyce of*

thine own corrupt heart, by laying his bonds upon thee, before thou hadſt diſcretion enough to make thy own election for fear thou ſhouldſt (as thou waſt naturally too prone) chooſe a miſſe. Bleſſe the Lord, O my ſoul, and all that is within me bleſſe his holy name, for Infant-Baptiſme, if upon no other account, yet upon this, that God engaged thee to the profeſſion of his name therein, before thou didſt arrive at thoſe years of diſcretion, wherein (poſſibly) hadſt thou been then at thy liberty, thou mightſt have been a diſcreet Atheiſt, and having once found the ſinfull ſweets of liberty, mighteſt have thought it wiſdome to have continued it, and have lived ſtill without God in the world. And ſerve this God willingly, who (to thy advantage) made thee then his ſervant, without thy will, that thou mighteſt (when thou cameſt to underſtand that advantage) ſerve him with the more entirenesſe of will, for ſo dealing with thee. And that thou mayeſt be the more wrought upon by the conſideration of this preventing mercy, theſe times ſhew thee, in abundance of ſad exampl'es, how evill a thing it is, to be left to chooſe a mans way by his own diſcretion; ſeeing thou daily ſeeſt, thoſe whom Satan hath ſo far prevailed withall, as to renounce the obligation they had to God in Infant-Baptiſme, and thereupon to conceit themſelves in the liberty of their own choice, runing through all forms (as they call them) that is, all wayes that pretend to any thing of Religion till at laſt they end in down right Atheiſme, and profeſſe themſelves to be nothing at all. Seeing therefore it is better with thee, (which in a great part thou oweſt to thy Infant-engagement to God) let it not ſeem grievous to thee to perform thy duty to this God, thy God, thy Father, and the guide of thy youth, Jer. 3. 5. I pray (neighbour)

bour try the operatiō of ſuch meditations, upon your ſoul now, and then, and I am verily perſwaded, you will love your Infant-Baptiſme the better for it, the longeſt day you live.

After. I will, *Sir*, I aſſure you when I come home, upon your recommendation. In the mean time, I pray you ſhew me how Infant-Baptiſme enforceth upon a man the duties he owes to others, and to God by them: the duties of the *ſecond Table.*

Pedo. [*Secondly*,] All others ſtand in relation to us either,

- *Oeconomically*, or,
- *Politically*——and ſo either
  - upon a *Church-account* as fellow-*Chriſtians*;
  - or upon a *civil account*, as
    - fellow-men and women,
    - or fellow-ſubjects.

[*Firſt*,] As to *Oeconomicall* or family-relation. Infant-Baptiſme being founded upon *family-relation*, as it is, being grounded upon a Covenant derived from the *head of a Family* (being a believer) unto all in the *family* (as in the right of *Abraham* to all his) ſurely, muſt needs be a firmer obligation to *family-duties* in thoſe mutuall relations, And no queſtion, *Abraham* being honoured by God ſo far as to be made the *root* from whence the *ſap* of ſuch an honour, and priviledge, was to be derived unto his family, did draw no ſmall incitement and encouragement from thence to propagate the knowledge, and fear of God to them, *to command his children, and his houſhold after him to keep the way of the Lord*, Gen.

*Gen.*18 19. That ſo he might make ſome anſwerable return to God, by procuring that ſervice from them to God, which ſuch an extraordinary priviledge called for. And every *head of a Family* being (by our principles) *an Abraham* to his Family, no doubt but ſuch as make conſcience of *walking in the ſteps of their Father Abraham*, will make the ſame uſe of that favor which he did.

But (more particularly, as to the relation between *Parents and Children*, in which relation (principally) this priviledge is derived) there is a mutual conſcience of duty, eaſily deduced from the Principles and practice of Infant-baptiſme, which the contrary principles and practiſes do not afford.

I. *From Parents to Children.* Parents hence ſee ground.

[1.] *To make conſcience of making their Children Gods.*

(1.) Partly, *By an external Covenant*, not denying them that priviledge which is in their power to conveigh to them: nor cutting off that *entail* which they themſelves, with ſo much advantage (above others who are born Heathens) received from their Anceſtors. It is no wonder, if they that know not the value and uſe of their own Infant-Baptiſme, and what a mercy themſelves received in it, do make no conſcience, nor ſcruple, to cut off their poſterity from it. He that knowes, or believes an Eſtate not worth the enjoying, will not care whether the *entail* to his poſterity be firm or no. But he that knowes it to be of conſiderable value, will (out of

of natural affection) not *cut it off*; nay, rather if it be weak, he will corroborate it as much as he can. And thus it is with a godly man of Pædobaptists principles. He thinks with himself, what a mercy it was to him to be a Covenanter with God, by Baptisme in Infancy, and surely, saith he, *I* will not be such a Monster in the pedigree of *my posterity*, that any one shall have cause to say hereafter, *in such an one was broken off the line of Covenant: relation to God in such a Family; such an one entituled all his posterity to heathenisme, and did his utmost endeavour to destroy the succession of the visible Church in his posterity.*

(2.) And partly, *by an internal and living Covenant*, such an one, as hath in the presence of God and his Church, *presented* his Children to God, and *chalenged* the ratification of Gods Covenant to his posterity, by baptisme; will think himself obliged to make them Gods, (as indeed he is hereby) upon a firmer tie then otherwise he would be.

Whether out of *thankfulnesse* to God. *Hath God vouchsafed me* (will such a Parent say) *the priviledge of conveighing this honour to my posterity, and made them partakers of a Church-relation to himself by my means, and shall I not so educate them, as they may hereafter walk answerably to such a mercy, that they may not make* God *ashamed to call them Children hereafter; who is not ashamed to be called their Father now?*

Or out of *conscience* of his solemn promise in the face of the Congregation, having made a deed of gift, and sealed it in *open Court* (as *I* may say)

say) whereby he hath solemnly made over his Children, even from the Cradle, and dedicated them to God. *Lord* (saith he) *thy vowes are upon me, thy vowes are upon me; I will pay my vowes unto thee* (which I have made) *in the presence of all thy people. Thou and thy Church have admitted my Child, as a visible member of the body of Christ, upon my claim and undertaking. And shall I falsifie my trust unto* God *and his Church, and deceive their expectations? shall I by my negligence in my Duty, of catechising, instructing, correcting, exemplary walking, do my endeavour to make my own deed of no effect. What a cheat, what a fraudulent conveyance would that be? And the more abominable, because of the parties concerned in it,* God *and his Church who (of all others in the world) should not be thus mocked.* I need not tell you, that such considerations as these, if duly set home by a serious conscience, may make even an *ungodly Professor*, conscientious in his duty towards his little ones, which no other cords could ever binde him unto. Psa. 116. 14-18.

Now compare this, with the *contrary principles and practice*, and you will easily see, that the *Anabaptist* is no way so much engaged, by his grounds and way, to take care of his Children, but only by the *common tie* of natural affection, and the *general obligation* of the Commandement of God; which (although very strong bonds in themselves, yet) because of the sluggishnesse, and backwardnesse, and untowardnesse of mens hearts (even the best) need some more particular, and special additions of personal engagements to fortifie them. And therefore it is, that

(though

though the common duty of Christianity, be in it self, sufficiently obliging, yet) Saints in all ages have laid *vowes* upon themselves; and the more *solemn and publick* those vowes have been, the more have they accounted them obliging; (as the case of *David* before named, *Psal.* 116. 14.) and also engaged themselves to the consideration of the many *personal* obligements as God hath laid upon them, as an *additional* quickening thereunto.

(2.) And (as Infant-Baptisme engageth the *Parents of Infants* so baptized, *to make them Gods*, so) in the next place, it affords them a large *ground of faith to pray for them*, that they may be so; *and to believe* (except they declare the contrary afterwards) that they are so.

Think therefore, how may a godly Parent *plead* the Covenant on the behalf of his Child *in spirituals*, even when a little one, especially when his title hath been allowed by God himself (in the persons of his *Minister* and *Church*) at his Baptisme. *Now* (Lord) *I will be bold to speak a word or two in thine ears, on the behalf of my Child, seeing thou hast not been ashamed to own him and me, in the face of thy Church; Thou hast marked my Childe for a Lambe of thine own fold; Lord wilt thou give empty signs? art thou not bound to make good the writings which thou staleſt to thy people, if they plead them? Lord, my Child is of a wolvish nature, wilt not thou who hast put thy sheep-mark upon him, make him a sheep. Lord, thou hast* Col. 2.11 *put Christ on him sacramentally*, Gal. 3. 27. *Help him to put on Christ savingly: help him to put off the body of the sins of the flesh, to be buried with Christ,*

Chriſt, and to riſe with him, Rom. 9. 1,2,3. And I think, in relation to *temporalls*, a godly Father may take the ſame advantage of this ſealed Covenant, to plead on the behalf of his Child. *Lord, I have little or nothing to leave to my Child*, (may a poor Saint ſay) *yet in that, thou haſt taken him into thy Family, I count him well provided for. God and the Covenant of grace are an ample portion.* Surely, (to my judgement) there is more to this purpoſe in that prayer of *Abraham* for *Iſhmael*, then we uſually take notice of. O *that Iſhmael* (ſaith he) *might live in thy ſight*, Gen. 17.18. God had in that very chapter told *Abraham*, that he would *eſtabliſh his Covenant with him and his ſeed*, v. 7. and by way of addition had promiſed him ſeed of *Sarah*. v. 15 16. *Abraham* admiring the goodneſſe of God in the promiſe of *Iſaac*, (which to him, being 100 years old, and to his wife *Sarah*, being 90. appeared an extraordinary mercy) and apprehending that *Iſaack and his poſterity* were to be the inheritors of that Covenant, to the excluſion of *Iſhmael*; (as a tender Father) improves the general Engagement of the Covenant to plead for him alſo. Q. D. *Lord, thou haſt made a Covenant with me and my ſeed, which Covenant, though it ſeem to be limited to my ſeed in* Iſaac, *yet* (*Lord*) Iſhmael *is of my ſeed too, and ſo within the Covenant, and upon that account, under a capacity of circumciſion. O let not him be diſinherited altogether, by the ſubſtitution of Iſaac in his ſtead. Is not Covenant-mercy large enough for* Iſaac *and* Iſhmael *too? O that* Iſhmael *might live in thy favour too.* And God anſwers him, even concerning *Iſhmael*, as

to the *temporal* mercies of the Covenant. v. 20. though his Covenant as to the Church-part, the *spiritual* part were *established with Isaac.*

After. Yea, but Sir, (to my minde) *Abraham* seems to put up that prayer for *Ishmael*, upon an *unbelieving account*; desiring, that (seeing it was so unlikely a thing that he should *have seed by Sarah*) the Covenant might be performed to *Ishmael*, who was already in being: And it is as if he said, *Lord, I am out of hopes of an Isaac, wherefore if thou wilt be a God in Covenant to me and my seed, let* Ishmael *be that seed.*

Pedo. Suppose this, yet it makes (nevertheless) to my purpose, which is to shew, *how Godly Parents may improve the Covenant, on the behalf of their seed.* But I conceive rather the *former sence* to be most proper to the place; because the Apostle acquits *Abraham* from any touch of *unbelief*, in the promise concerning *Isaac*, *Rom.* 4. 19. Nay, he sets him out as an admirable pattern of faith in that very particular, by shewing, what *Abraham* might have pleaded for unbelief from the *decrepitness of his own body, and the deadnesse of* Sarahs *wombe*; which yet (saith he) *he considered not, nor staggered through unbelief, but gave glory to God.*

After. Be it as you say. But do not the *Anabaptists principles* yield them this plea on the behalf of their Children also?

Pedo. No; for they deny any such Covenant between God and their seed, till they come to plead it themselves at *years of discretion.* For if they granted this Covenant, and that so visible (as to the persons whom it concerns) that it might

might be pleaded for them, they could not deny them Baptiſme; for being *viſibly* in Covenant with God, who can juſtly deny them the Seale of that Covenant. To this (as I remember) I have ſpoken at large before, and therefore refer you thither for fuller ſatisfaction. And (from my experience) carry this along with you. That *I know divers in the Land, who (to this day) acknowledge their Engagements to their godly Anceſtors, for pleading the Covenant on their behalf, when they were not able to plead it for themſelves.*

But I pray Sir, what meant you a while ſince, when you told me that godly Parents, from the baptiſme of their Children in infancy, have a *large ground to believe, that thoſe Children are Gods Children, till they declare the contrary?* *After.*

I underſtand it, concerning their Children, who die in infancy (before they arrive at ſuch years, in which by a wicked and ungodly converſation, they declare that they were never Gods otherwiſe then by an external Covenant, as *Iſhmael* did) concerning them my (not onely opinion but) ſtrong perſwaſion and aſſurance is, that their Parents are bound to draw a comfortable Argument from their baptiſme to their ſalvation, and that they have good ground ſo to do. Concerning which I have diſcourſed at large already. Onely, I ſhall deſire you at preſent (ſuppoſing that the Lord is in Covenant, and that Covenant ſealed in Baptiſme, with the Infant-ſeed of believers, to anſwer me, *did God ever break Covenant with any, who did not break with him firſt?* *Paed.*

No ſurely, *Gods Covenant is never defective.* All *After.*

those who being in external Covenant with God, do not annul it by their own wickedness, shall finde it fulfilled to all intents and purposes.

Pæd. And can Infants in Infant-age commit any such wickedness, as may annul it? (for as for original sin, God took them into a Covenant under the pollution of that with a *non-obstante.*)

After. No surely.

Pæd. Then (by your own grant) I have my conclusion. To wit, that *there is sufficient ground, and therefore it is a duty to believe their salvation, dying in Covenant with God in Infant years.*

After. But have not the Anabaptists as good ground to believe the salvation of their Infants when they die in infancy, though unbaptized, and under no such Covenant?

Pæd. No surely. No more then they may have concerning a *Turk*, or an unconverted *Indians* Child. For that which gives any visible hopes of salvation to any man concerning another, is his visible standing in the Covenant of God. For to be an Alien to the Covenants of promise, is to be without hope. *Eph.* 2.12. so that I may (without breach of charity) say concerning all the Children of Heathens, dying in infancy, *They are taken into the hands of God, who indeed may (for any thing I know) save them* by prerogative, and an undiscovered depth of mercy; *but he hath afforded me no ground, so much as to hope, that any of them are saved, because the Statute Law of the Kingdom, doth not extend salvation beyond the Covenant.* Now an Anabaptist

baptiſts faith concerning the Infants of believing Parents, even his own, puts them into the ſame *irrelative* condition (as to God, and the Covenant) with the Children of Infidels, and (by conſequence) under the ſame hopeleſneſſe of ſalvation. Now let tender Parents conſider, who undoubtedly would think it a ſad thing to bring forth Children to the deſtroyer, what ſad principles the contrary principles are, by and according to which, they muſt kiſſe their beloved babes, when they are a dying with that ſad farewel, which the dying Heathen gave his departing ſoul.

Animula, vagula, blandula, &c.

Alas, my poor pretty babe, what place art thou now going to? Heaven, I have no grounded hope thou wilt be admitted into, except by an unuſual favour of God, which was yet never heard to have been extended to any: and hell, I tremble to think it ſhould be filled ever the fuller from my bowels. O happy, happy are the wombs that bear not, and the breaſts that never gave ſuck: How much better were it never to have Children, then have them a few minutes, and then part with them for ever upon ſuch uncertainties! This is all the hope thy diſconſolate Mother hath, in the loſſe of that earthly comfort which ſhe expected from thee, that thy early death addeth thoſe dayes to thee in heaven, which it denyeth thee on earth; and that I part with thee now, to meet thee again hereafter in Abrahams boſome. But alas, this Doctrine tells me, that thoſe hopes are all of them Caſtles in the ayr, building without a foundation, and thou and thoſe muſt be buried in the ſame grave.

After. Truly Sir, this is *sad Doctrine*, and I think enough to reclaim my wife from her good inclinations to that way, if she once understand, that it hazards the shutting all her Children dying in infancy out of heaven.

Peds. No wonder, if women when they understand it, be justly sensible of the sadnesse of it; for surely their share in the qualms, and pains, and throwes, of breeding and bearing Children renders them more affectionate then Fathers can be. Wherefore I wonder, that so many of that sex should be daily seduced to that Doctrine. But I am reconciled to them upon this account, that I believe they do not see the consequences of that Doctrine, which they professe; and so do maintain those hopes still, though they destroy the grounds of them; and (suitably to the Logick of the weaker sex,) hold the conclusion, though they deny the premises.

After. I assure you Sir, I will endeavour to make my wife understand it, and do indeed heartily thank you for it. For I assure you, (though I have had personal conferences with others of that way, yet) most of the prejudices which I have had against that Doctrine which you professe, I have received from her; being loath to intrench upon her conscience, in baptizing our Children without her consent, I disputed it with her as well as I could, upon what grounds I had taken up from ordinary discourse; but I was not so well studied in the point, nor so well instructed as she was, and therefore thought fit to let her have her way, and complyed with her in some measure. But now, I hope, by Gods blessing,

and

and the help of your grounds to renew the debate, and poſſibly God may give us both underſtanding, in a buſineſſe of ſuch a practical influence, to go hand in hand, in the right way.

I pray God you may; and I believe the more you think on theſe things, the more you will be inclined to a good eſteem of your old principles, and the uſe of them, which you now underſtand better then you did before. And I ſhall diſmiſſe you to the practice of your good intendments, when I have furniſhed you with two or three conſiderations more, which *I* remember, remain to be diſpatched according to the method propoſed. To wit, concerning the engagement which our principles lay upon Children to Parents. *I* pray you *Sir*, let me not depart from you uninformed in any particular which you think neceſſary to inſtruct me in. *Pædo.*

You catechize your children, do you not? *After.*

I did a while ſince Sir, till *I* began to think it was to no purpoſe to baptize them, and then *I* concluded alſo, it was of as little uſe to catechize them, till they came to years of diſcretion; ſeeing *I* concluded that their ignorance, and incapacity to underſtand what they did, rendered them alike unfit for the one as for the other. Beſides, *I* looked upon both as things, which at the preſent would be either profaned by their ignorance, or breed them up in a meer form of godlineſſe. *Pædo.*

I thought principles of Anabaptiſme might eaſily be improved to ſuch a neglect of chil- *Pædo.*

drens education; and now I finde it too true in you But *friend*, I pray you consider that good Christians in all ages, have laboured to season the heads of their little ones with principles of Religion, even as *Eunice* and *Lois* taught *Timothy* the *Scriptures from a sucking Child* (as the word signifies, 2 *Tim.* 1.5.3.15. And that 'tis Gods command, that you should *train up a little Infant-Child* (by degrees as it is capable) *in the way wherein it should go*. Nor shall you be herein more guilty of prophanation and nourishing formality then *Timothies* Mother, and Grandmother were, who are commended for that practise in Scripture. But when you did catechize them, did you not teach them to *honour and obey their Parents in the Lord?*

ἀπὸ βρέφους.

Prov. 22. 6.

After. Yes, I did, out of the *fifth Commandement*, and Eph.6.2.

Ped. You did well; but did you never take any ground from *Infant-Baptisme*, to presse it upon them?

After. No, nor can I easily see how that could any way conduce thereunto. Do you conceive it doth?

Ped. Yes, and that abundantly. For, if the *reason* which is concluded in every duty, do render it the more due; then surely, the *stronger* the reason of any duty is, the more it is enforced thereby. Now, the duty of *honour*, that is, filial reverence and obedience, which the fifth Commandement requireth, is founded upon the reason of that natural relation which we have to Parents, as the Authours of our natural being, education, and livelihoods. And this is that which (as it is a duty of thankfulnesse) the Law of God

God requires; (For as for that στοργὴ or *natural affection*, which is implanted in nature, that cannot properly be the ſubject of a Law, but is implanted by a kind of *inſtinct*, like that which is in other Creatures, conveighed with their very beings, from the *ſire* or *dam* to their young ones.) Now, if the Relation that Children have to Parents, and the benefits which from them deſcend upon poſterity, be capable of degrees (as indeed they are, there being a vaſt difference (in this reſpect) between being born a Prince and a beggar) then ſurely, ſeeing the *reaſon* of commanded duty to Parents, depends upon the advantages which accrew by that *relation*; the greater thoſe advantages are, the ſtronger is the obligation to duty, which depends upon them. Whence it follows inevitably, that by how much *ſpiritual* priviledges exceed all *natural* priviledges, by ſo much doth the obligation of thankfulneſſe and duty ariſing therefrom, more ſtrongly, emerge from the relation which we bear to thoſe, from whom they are derived to us. Wherefore (to conclude this point) it ſeems alſo undeniably to follow, that thoſe Parents to whom we owe a *derivation of Chriſtianity*, and a viſible *relation to God*, (if at leaſt) we judge theſe to be any priviledges) are, in a more eminent manner, entituled unto the *duty*, which they require from their Children, then otherwiſe they could be. And indeed not only *Reaſon*, but *Scripture* alſo affords ſufficient confirmation to this truth. For if the obedience of Children to Parents be by the Apoſtles Rule to be paid, ἐν κυρίῳ, *in the Lord*, Eph. 6. 1. that is, *for the Lords*

Lords sake, then (beyond all question) it is most due to those Parents, from whom that relation to the Lord, upon which obedience is founded, is derived to them. And (if I be not grosly mistaken) our principles (and not those of the *Anabaptists*) are the rot whence this consideration also springs.

After. Truly *Sir*, I thank you for this additional information, which I hope, I shall make a comfortable improvement of, and *I* do intend, by Gods help, not to deny my self the advantage of laying such an obligation upon my Child any longer. The Lord set home this wholsome lesson upon my Children, and others, who I doubt, do not consider of it as they should. Onely because the contrary practise of baptizing grown persons, seems to promote the *duties of fellowship and communion with others*, I pray you (for a close) that you will afford me some help in this particular also. For I finde that in the primitive times Church-membership was a matter of *choyce*, not derived by paternal right, and the restoring of this is urged by some, as the onely way to reform Churches from the corruptions which seem inevitably to follow upon the baptizing of Infants; by means whereof so many ignorant and prophane persons go under the name of Christians, and make an unavoidably corrupt Church among us, as we have found by many years experience, shew me the use of Infant-baptisme to *Church-Relations*, as well as *Family Relations*.

Pedo. I shall most willingly satisfie your desires in this

this particular alſo. Wherefore I muſt deſire you to conſider

1. That in the primitive times, *Infants were not baptized* into Church-fellowſhip, is hard to determine from Scripture: nay it ſeems more probable to the contrary, ſeeing the Apoſtles baptized whole houſeholds frequently; and that there were no Children in all thoſe houſeholds, incapable of making profeſſion of their faith, ſeems very improbable. I am ſure the perſons then admitted at years of diſcretion, were encouraged to baptiſme, upon the conſideration of an hereditary Covenant to their poſterity (which eſtabliſheth the ground of Infant-baptiſme) what elſe means the Apoſtle *Peter, Act.* 2. 39. to tell the Jews and Proſelites, that *the Covenant* belonged, not only *to them*, but alſo to *their Children?*

2. But (to let that paſſe) I perſwade my ſelfe, that the admiſſion of members to baptiſme, upon perſonal profeſſion, is a courſe more directly tending to the corruption of the Church, by unworthy members, then the contrary practice of admitting them *in infancy*. Upon a double reaſon.

1. Becauſe Infant-members (while ſuch) are the *pureſt part of mankinde*, being untainted with thoſe pollutions of actual ſin, of which riper years afford a more unhappy fertility in every ſociety under heaven.

2. Becauſe no Infant-member (as ſuch) is *capable of hypocriſie*, (which frequently adheres to the ſpirits of very many of thoſe of riper years,) they being capable of being tempted to take

take up spiritual relations upon worldly advantages. As is before said.

After. Yea, but afterwards Sir, they grow up, and though they have no Title to Religion, but *Tradition* and *Baptisme*, and no more of it but a *bare empty form*, yea, though in their lives they contradict that very profession into which they were admitted in infancy, and make afterwards; yet they challenge and enjoy communion with the Church in your way, because they are baptized persons.

Pedo. 1. I answer, that though *to be baptized* (by our principles) give a *right* to all Ordinances of Communion, (wherein also we think we walk by the rule of the Scriptures, in which we no where read of any baptized person, except upon some just offence given, debarred from Church-Communion) yet we do not hold that it so gives a *right* to that Church-communion in other Ordinances, but that any person giving occasion of just scandall, may be (and by our constant practise is) excluded from them, till satisfaction given.

2. And if formerly, and of late (in divers places which reformation hath not yet reached) there be instances to be given of such *unworthy admissions*; yet, it is to be considered, that Infant-baptisme is no way chargeable with them. Seeing that if *Church-Officers* be alike careless in the *Anabaptisticall way*, (and they are so in divers places of this Nation) as some of our way, who give occasion to this scandal, are; baptisme at riper years, may open the doors of the Church to persons every way as obnoxious,

as

as any of our Members baptized in Infancy can be ſuppoſed to be.

3. The *true cauſe* therefore of thoſe corruptions in the *Churches of our way*, is, that there is no effectual courſe taken to *catechize* thoſe Children who are baptized, (whence proceed our *ignorant* members) nor power of Diſcipline and Government in our hands (for the moſt part) to cenſure, and caſt out thoſe that are looſe and prophane; whence proceeds the abundance of our *ſcandalous* Members. And let (as I have ſaid) the pureſt re-baptized congregations be deprived of thoſe two means to continue them ſo; they will quickly grow (for all your baptiſme at years of diſcretion) as corrupt ſocieties as the worſt of ours now are. And ſome of them in divers places are ſo already.

And now (becauſe you have given me occaſion to take the practice of Infant-Baptiſme, as it relates to *Church communion*, into conſideration) I ſhall in the laſt place ſhew you ſome hints, which may be taken from thence to advance the practiſe of *holineſſe in a politicall Relation*, which I before promiſed when I entered upon the uſe of it to Family-Relations, which I ſhall only handle in *Relation to the Church*, to which baptiſme only looks.

I remember your promiſe, and expect the performance of it at the ſame rate of ſatisfaction which (I bleſſe God) your former diſcourſe hath given me in abundance. I ſhall endeavour not to fail your expectation. *After.*

Firſt therefore, the practiſe of Infant-baptiſm yields a ſanctified heart plentiful matter of *Pedo.*

prayſe

prayse to God for the *enlargement of the bounds of the Church* thereby, and the blessed *continuance of its succession*, from one Generation to another.

1. As for the former of these: the *enlargement of the bounds of the Church visible*, how much it conduceth thereunto to seal Infant-members by baptisme, may be easily perceived, if we compare the *spreading of this leaven* over whole Nations this way, with the *slow and uncertain progresse* of it under the other, and adverse way of Anabaptisme; for where there is one man that takes up Christianity (as far as to the Profession of it) upon terms of *choyce*, we see an hundred engaged therein, by this way of obliging *them in Infancy*. Nay, and in relation to that very *choyce*, we finde by experience, that many persons at years of discretion, are much swayed thereunto, by their receiving the badge of it in Infancy. For the farther illustration hereof, suppose an experiment to be made among the *native Indians in America*. Let the progress of Religion among them be confined only to the conversion and profession of grown men and women, in *one part* of that wilderness, of heathenisme and barbarisme, and enlarged *in another part* (equally populous) according to the Rules of Infant-Baptisme, and the difference of visible believers in one Age will easily appear on this hand by many thousands. For my part, I conceive it morally impossible to rivet Christian Religion into the *body* of any *Nation*, but by the way of Infant-Baptisme. And if Christs Command be to *disciple Nations*, as it

is,

is, *Mat.*28.19. ſurely, (to me) it implies the practiſe of Infant-Baptiſme as the only way likely to effect it.

But, I pray Sir, what matter of *praiſe* to God for *enlargement of the Church*, can be juſtly gathered from the additions of ſuch numbers thereunto, the hundreth part whereof, are more Chriſtians by *chance* then by *choyce*. No Prince would think his Dominions much enlarged, by the acceſſion of millions of ſuch *Subjects*. *After.*

Yes very much. For it is no ſmall matter, that an univerſal *face of Religion* is preſerved in a Nation, though upon the Termes you ſpeak of. For where all are (at leaſt) profeſſed Chriſtians, under what obligation ſoever, there is leſſe viſible oppoſition againſt Chriſt and his wayes, then where the farre *major part* are profeſſed Heathens, or Turks or Jews, or men of no Religion. *Pedo.*

And the corruption of Religion would (in ſuch an univerſal ſubmiſſion to the profeſſion thereof) leſſe be promoted, then in the confinement of it to ſome few perſons amidſt a generality of men otherwiſe engaged. As appears in thoſe parts of the world where Chriſtians live mixed with the far greater numbers of an adverſe Religion, as in *Turkey*, where it hath ſuffered very great corruptions in many main points thereof through thoſe mixtures. And as to the inſtance you bring of a *Prince and his Subjects*, I anſwer, I doubt not but if the *King of France* had the whole *Kingdom of Spain* under ſuch an Allegiance to him, as the whole *Nation of England* hath (by means of Infant-Baptiſme) ſworn

sworn to *Christ*, he would think himself more master of it, then to relinquish it upon easie termes, which may satisfie as to that point.

Aster. What farther say you to the *continuance of Religion*, through the succession of divers Generations?

Pædo. I say as much, that we may and are bound all to be thankful to God for deriving our Religion to this *present Generation* (and so may, except the adversaries principles and practise hinder it, *succeeding Generations*) by the means of Infant-Baptisme. For surely (in all probability) had our *fore-fathers* left our *immediate Parents*, unbaptized in Infancy, and relinquished them to choose their Religion till ripe years, it cannot be imagined, but that many thousands of them would not have derived to their posterity of this age so much as the Profession of it: and if *our immediate Ancestors* had dealt in the same manner with us, how many thousands of us would at this day have been without any Religion at all, so much as in profession and visibility? And to go downward to two or three succeeding Generations, upon the same principles; and how many soever may be supposed in our present age to be Christians, yet by that time the number of Christians in this Nation would be like a *lodge in a Garden of Cowcumbers, or like a few Grapes on the top of a Vine*; after the Devil and Heathenism had gathered the full vintage. So that (how slight soever some men make of Infant-Baptisme) I fear not to tell (even those very persons) that they *owe their Religion* to it; and they are very inconsiderate in their principles and

and practiſe (if only upon this account) that they *undermine* the very *foundations* of ſucceſſion thereof to ſucceeding ages.

Surely *Sir*, you do (by this diſcourſe) *call my ſins to remembrance.* For I have (I confeſſe) been very deficient in the ſenſe I ſhould have had of this mercy, both on mine own part, and on the part, of the Nation in which I live. But what farther *uſes of communion* can you draw from Infant-Baptiſme? *Aſtr.*

An uſe of *charity and Church-unity in the matter of admiſſion of Church-members*, the want whereof hath been the main occaſion of dividing this miſerable Church and Nation into ſo many *fractions* and *factions*, as pull it aſunder peece-meale at this day. For the principles of Infant-Baptiſme teach me, to look upon all ſuch perſons as are in Infancy admitted to baptiſme, as *actual Church-members*, till they do afterwards render themſelves incapable of that Relation, and are cut off by Church-cenſure. This is a peaceable principle; & ſtops the gap againſt the moſt perplexing queſtions concerning the admiſſion of members upon profeſſion of faith and repentance. For to ſay what I think in this caſe (without a deſign of occaſioning any new quarrels with any body) it ſeems clear to me, that in the time of the Apoſtles, *profeſſion of Faith and Repentance was not required as an immediate qualification for Church-Membership*: So that no one (to my beſt remembrance) was ever required to make ſuch a profeſſion to render him capable of admiſſion into any Church-fellowſhip, but they admitted all that were baptized, *Pædo.*

eo nomine, to all acts of Church-communion. So that supposing the right of Infants to baptisme (without this profession) as we do, the qualification for Church-membership is therein supposed, and so no new one necessary to be enquired after, except upon some emergent occasion any person so baptized, become justly obnoxious to farther enquiry in reference to admission to, or suspension from actual communion, though his Church-membership in general be no way questioned. And this *reserve* will sufficiently secure us against the danger of living in mixed communions by reason of this charity.

2. As also (secondly) an *use of Christian watchfulnesse over, and prayer* for such persons, who in Infancy are made fellow-members, (upon a Church-obligation) that they do not turn Apostates to their Membership. It is indeed (if duly considered) a *duty* incumbent upon the *whole Church and every member* to be responsible for the education, and regulation of the Children of those, who possibly may be too guilty of neglecting them themselves, or may die, and leave them Orphans, *these little ones are fellow-members with our selves, and so our care extends equally to them, as to others of riper age, yea, and more (in some respects) to them, then to others, because their tender age makes them more incapable of taking care for themselves.* Me thinks it is a sad thing, that the Children of Christian Parents should be left only to *the large charity* of those with whom they converse (as others of the world are) without any *peculiar obligation*, lying upon any, to take more care of them, then

of

of the Children of Turks or other Heathens. How much more conducing to their spiritual advantage is it, to make the whole Church their Guardians, and so make them part of the charge of the Officers appointed by Christ to watch over them, by bestowing upon them the engaging Relation of fellow-members in that body; which we do by our principles.

Yea, but I perswade my selfe, this is a thing which is very little considered by the generality of those who walk by those principles. For we see the Children of such persons, as they own to be Church-members, are left as much to their own liberty, and as much thereby endangered, as if the Church had no relation to them. *After.*

No, it is not altogether as you say. For the Church takes so much care of them, as to require a solemn *sponsion* on their behalf from the Parents, or Christian friends, or both, at their Baptisme, that they shall be educated in the faith and fear of God; which is an evident demonstration, that this principle is universally received, *that baptized Infants are the Pupils or wards of the whole Church, and they their Guardians; and the undertakers,* (whether Parents or Godfathers) *receive that trust by deputation from the Church, unto whose charge the Infants born within it do (as to their souls) principally belong.* *Pædo.*

And if afterwards there be a defect of enquiry into the *discharge of this trust*, in the Church, or its Officers, and so their trust defeated, without any account taken thereof, or remedy provided to relieve in such a case; that is the fault of those, who walk not up to their declared prin-

ciples, and not the fault of the *principles* which they profeſs to walk by.

And (laſtly) the conſcientious care of divers Miniſters to catechize the Children of their Pariſhes; with the conſtitutions of the Church in former times, requiring all perſons to preſent their Children thereunto (though of late for want of renewing that power in the vacancy of Church-Government ſinfully neglected in many places) may ſufficiently diſcharge many of us from ſuch an imputation. And (I hope) for the future, ſome courſe will be by our Governors herein effectually taken, that whiles we generally retain, (by their countenance) the practiſe of Infant-Baptiſme, the ends of it, may not be loſt through the negligence of Parents and Governours of Families, to preſent the Children under their charge to ſo neceſſary and uſeful an Ordinance, as *catechiſing* them in the principles of Religion is, which the Lord grant.

After. I heartily joyn with you in this *prayer* and *hope*. And ſhall (God willing) as to mine own particular, practiſe accordingly; thanking God that he hath caſt me under ſuch a Paſtor, as will be conſcientiouſly carefull of my Children, and encouraging you by thoſe Childrens attendance upon your inſtruction, which by my paternal power, I ſhall henceforward require them to do. Mean while, I profeſs my ſelf very much engaged to you for the pains you have taken in this diſcourſe to ſatisfie me, in ſo important and momentous a doubt as this, and hope I ſhall continue ſtedfaſt and unſhaken in the retaining of

of ſo beneficial an Ordinance, to my lives end.

The Lord give you ſtrength ſo to do. And for my part, I think this day very well imployed, in that I have (by Gods bleſſing) confirmed you therein. The Lord grant that others may, by the publication hereof, be in like manner, reduced to a *due eſteem* and *practicall improvement of their Baptiſme in Infancy*, that they may not either *ignorantly* part with the practiſe, nor *profanely* neglect the husbanding thereof to their ſpiritual advantage, as too many do. *Pædo.*

FINIS.